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The lively Portraicture of
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The portrait of Sir Tobie Matthew is reproduced from the picture given in Sir Tobie's posthumous book, "A Collection of Letters," edited and published by John Donne, LL.D., son of the Dean of St. Paul's, in 1660. The name is misspelt by the engraver.

A TRUE HISTORICAL RELATION OF THE CONVERSION OF

SIR TOBIE MATTHEW

TO THE HOLY CATHOLIC FAITH; WITH THE ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES THEREOF.

EDITED, AND NOW PUBLISHED FOR THE FIRST TIME, WITH A PREFACE, BY HIS KINSMAN,

A. H. MATHEW.

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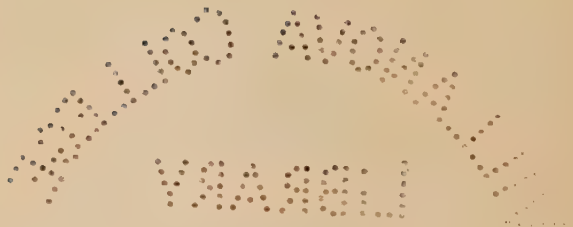

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PREFACE.

SIR TOBIE MATTHEW,* priest, Jesuit, and Knight, was born at Salisbury, 3 October, 1577, and was the eldest son of Dr. Tobie Matthew, then Dean of Christchurch, Oxford, who subsequently became Anglican Bishop of Durham, and finally Archbishop of York. His mother was Frances Parker, widow of the Rev. Matthew Parker, who was a son of the Archbishop of Canterbury of that name. Her father was William Barlow, Bishop of Chichester, the reputed consecrator of Matthew Parker, the founder of the new Anglican hierarchy. Dr. Tobie Matthew, the father of Sir Tobie, was the son of John Matthew, a Bristol merchant, a member of the ancient family of the Mathews of Glamorgan, who traced their descent from Cunedda, the over-king of all Wales, ancestor of Gwaethvoed Vawr, Prince of Cardigan, the progenitor of Sir David Mathew of Llandaff, and of the Earls of Landaff of Thomastown, Co. Tipperary. This family, for many generations powerful in South Wales, remained for the most part true to the

* The name varies in its orthography in the different branches of the family.

1209

ancient Faith all through the troublous times of the Reformation, and the evil days that succeeded it. John Matthew of Bristol and his wife, however, conformed to the new religion, under pressure of the Penal Laws of Elizabeth. Yet they were strongly opposed to the ultra-Protestant opinions embraced by their son, and did their utmost to prevent his entry into the Anglican ministry. He, however, followed the advice of clerical friends and became a clergyman, later on to be noted for his vigorous repression of Catholicism in the North of England, his severity towards "Popish recusants," and his activity in preaching, chiefly polemical discourses, in every portion of his extensive dioceses. Sir Tobie, son of this famous Protestant divine, displayed remarkable intellectual powers at an early age, for when only twelve years old he matriculated from Christchurch, 13 March, 1589-1590, graduated B.A., 5 June, 1594, and M.A., 5 July, 1597. Not long after this he attracted notice by his skill as a disputant and his abilities as an orator. Among others whose acquaintance he made was Francis Bacon, with whom he formed a life-long friendship, being frequently described by the philosopher as his *alter ego*. In 1595 he took the part of the Esquire in Essex's "Device," the dialogue of which was com-

posed by Bacon. The performance took place on the Queen's Day, in the presence of Elizabeth and her court. In 1596 he was taken seriously ill, and was at variance with his father, then at Durham, who was greatly blamed for his severity. Two years later he went to stay with young Throckmorton of Coughton, a good Catholic, residing in France; and in the same year was again in trouble with his father on account of his debts. On 15 May, 1599, he was admitted at Gray's Inn, and on 3 October, 1601, entered Parliament as M.P. for Newport, Cornwall. In a letter written by Bacon to James I. in March, 1603, he is described as "a very worthy and rare young gentleman." On 25 March, 1604, he was returned M.P. for St. Alban's, *vice* Sir Francis Bacon, who elected to sit for Ipswich. Shortly after his election he determined to visit Italy, in fulfilment of a desire he had long entertained. He had some difficulty in gaining his parents' consent, for they feared that his intercourse with Catholics might induce him to change his religion. Finding it easier to obtain his father's permission to go no greater way from home than France, he solicited both parents' consent to spend six months in that country before the reassembling of Parliament. They reluctantly complied, expressly stipulating, however, that

Tobie should not visit either Italy or Spain. He agreed to these conditions, without intending to abide by them. In after life he expressed deep contrition for this act of duplicity. On 3 July, 1604, he sailed for France, but within a few weeks returned secretly to England, for what purpose is uncertain. His life up to this period was that of a gallant and a courtier, much of his time being devoted to pleasure and dissipation. Early in 1605 he again started for France, this time continuing his journey to Florence, where he submitted to the Catholic Church. The "True Historicall Relation" of his sentiments on that occasion is what is here printed at length for the first time. During his imprisonment in the Fleet, Bacon, who was at that period strongly prejudiced against Catholicism, endeavoured to persuade him to abandon the Faith he had embraced at Florence. Finding his arguments powerless to influence Tobie, he ceased to employ them, but continued to exhibit the same regard and esteem for him as before, and showed his appreciation of Tobie's literary judgment by submitting various literary compositions for his opinion, a practice he continued to the end.

In April, 1607-8, Tobie obtained a permit from James I. to travel abroad, and went first to Flanders, and then, with Sir Robert Shirley, to

Madrid. While there Bacon sent to him a copy of his "Advancement of Learning," and the key to his famous cipher, about which he requested secrecy. In the following February he received from Bacon his *De Sapientia Veterum*, and in 1611 went to Venice with his friend, George Gage (of the family of the Gages of Firle, Sussex), through whom he made the acquaintance of Edward Norgate, the illuminer. He was extremely anxious to obtain permission to return to England, but the King refused to listen to his importunities, the only reason being that Tobie had become a Catholic.

He then proceeded with George Gage to Rome to study for the priesthood at the Roman College. They were ordained together by Cardinal Bellarmine in May, 1614, after which Tobie went back to Madrid. On his way through France he met Villiers, afterwards Duke of Buckingham, with whom he formed a lasting friendship, and through whose influence James I. consented to allow his return to England. The fact of his being a priest was not revealed even to his most intimate friends. About the middle of May, 1617, he landed at Dover, staying first at the house of Winwood, and then going on a visit to Bacon at Gorhambury. In August he was invited by Thomas Wilbraham

to meet the King at Townsend, near Nantwich. By October he was settled in London, where he formed the acquaintance of Gondomar, the celebrated Spanish Ambassador, to whose house he paid almost daily visits. In 1618 a translation into Italian of Bacon's Essays was issued from London. This was not by Tobie, but the epistle dedicatory to the Duke of Genoa, which prefaces the book, was from his pen.

In the same year, his constant refusal to take the obnoxious oath of allegiance so angered James that Tobie was ordered to quit the kingdom, and he again departed for Flanders, where he interested himself in the exiled English Religious then resident in that country. The Earl of Bristol, however, pleaded his cause so successfully with James that Tobie was once more allowed to re-visit England, and on 29 December, 1621, he landed at Dover, and proceeded to London. In May, 1622, he was again with Gondomar, and in June he sustained a disputation before the King at the instance of Buckingham's mother, who had become a Catholic.

At this period negotiations were in progress with the Holy See for a dispensation for the marriage of Prince Charles with the Spanish Infanta, and Tobie was the first direct agent at

the English court employed in the matter, his friend, Father George Gage, being also engaged as special messenger between the courts of Rome and England.

In the dispute which arose at this time between some of the secular clergy and the Jesuits, with reference to the restoration of episcopal jurisdiction, Tobie, though not a Jesuit himself at this epoch, sided with the Society, and partially defeated the intentions of certain secular priests who had gained the ear of Pope Gregory XV. Whilst crediting Tobie with the best motives in this transaction, we have to conclude that the tactics he employed to gain the desired end would not commend themselves to a man of honour at the present day.

At the time of Bacon's fall, Tobie was wholly sympathetic, and wrote a letter to the ex-Chancellor, who compared it to "old gold." In 1623 Tobie was despatched to Madrid by James to advise Prince Charles and the licentious Buckingham, and proved himself to be a discreet negociator, a prudent counsellor, and a skilled, though finally unsuccessful, diplomat. After the failure of the negociations, largely due to Buckingham, Tobie returned to England, and met with a highly flattering reception at Court; and on 20

October, 1623, the King knighted him at Royston. These marks of the Royal favour appear to have induced his parents to relent and invite their son to York, where he stayed for some time with them.

In 1624 Sir Tobie was elected as one of the eighty-four "Essentials" of Edmund Bolton's "Academe Royal." The scheme proved abortive. In June, 1625, he went to Bologne, whence he wrote an interesting description of the Princess Henrietta Maria to the Duchess of Buckingham. In the same year Bacon, at Sir Tobie's request, added his "Essay on Friendship" to the series, in commemoration of their long intimacy, and on his death in 1626 bequeathed Sir Tobie £30 to buy a ring. During the next few years Sir Tobie was much abroad. His father and mother, both of whom died in affluent circumstances, bequeathed him nothing beyond a small piece of plate, owing to his change of religion, which they never forgave.

After the accession of Charles I., Sir Tobie identified himself more openly with Catholics. He has sometimes been confused with another priest, who was known as "Fr. Price," but this pseudonym was never "adopted by Sir Tobie," as has been alleged.

Being much esteemed by the unhappy Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, Sir Tobie, in 1633,

accompanied him to Ireland in the capacity of secretary. In July, 1636, he stayed with the Earl of Salisbury at Hatfield, and was the object of much venom on the part of the puritan party, who circulated all kinds of false and injurious reports concerning him, among others that he was an abettor of the Gunpowder Plot. In consequence of the libellous falsehoods published by Andreas Habernfeld, Boswell, and the notorious William Prynne, and the commotion created by these fanatics, Sir Tobie was, in October, 1640, arrested, and both Houses of Parliament actually petitioned the Crown for his banishment. Sir Tobie was, however, released, and withdrew to Raglan Castle as first chaplain to the Marquess of Worcester. The disturbed condition of affairs, and the approach of the civil wars, compelled him to quit the country, and he returned to his beloved Flanders, spending much time in the society of the English Carmelite nuns at Antwerp and the English Jesuits at Ghent. He was received into the Society at an uncertain period before his death, possibly only upon his death-bed. That he died a Jesuit at Ghent on 13 October, 1655, aged 77, is certain. His remains were laid in the vault underneath the church, whence they were removed and, with those of other deceased fathers, thrown into a fosse by the

Revolutionists, in 1798, when the church was razed to the ground. Two wills of Sir Tobie's are preserved at the English College in Rome, dated, respectively, 1614 and 1647.

THE original MS. of the following narrative by Sir Tobie Matthew, now published for the first time, belonged for more than a century to Sir Tobie's kinsfolk, the Catholic family of Mathew, resident in County Tipperary. By them it was lent to the Rev. Alban Butler, who embodied extracts from it in his "The Life of Sir Tobie Matthews" (*sic*), published in 1795. After Alban Butler's death the MS. disappeared, having, apparently, been stolen. Some years later it was discovered by the Rev. Dr. W. C. Neligan of Cork, in the possession of a Catholic family in that city, from whom he purchased it. In 1852 Dr. Neligan resigned his preferment and became a Catholic, and sent many of his rare books and MSS. to London, among them Sir Tobie's MS., which was included by mistake in the sale. In 1868 Dr. Neligan recovered the precious MS. He had previously, in 1856, published extracts from it, which were printed by W. H. Smith in "Bacon and

Shakespeare." For some years it had been in the possession of Mr. Joseph Lilly, the bookseller, who valued it at a high price. On the death of Dr. Neligan it appears to have come into the market again, and, after passing through various hands, became the property of Professor Edward Dowden, who now kindly permits its publication. In 1861 the Surtees Society endeavoured to obtain a transcript of the MS., but failed to do so. In 1900 the late Mr. C. Kegan Paul also recommended its publication. The spelling has been modernized by Professor Dowden.

A. H. MATHEW.

Chelsfield, Kent.
24 Nov., 1903.

NOTE.—* The "friend" was Dame Mary Gage, O.S.B., daughter of Sir Edward Gage, Bart., of Firle, Sussex. She was a member of the exiled English Benedictine Order, then refugees in Brussels. The Community is now represented at East Bergholt. A younger brother of Dame Mary Gage was hanged on suspicion of complicity in Babington's Conspiracy. Another brother was Fr. George Gage, S.J., who took a prominent part in the negociations between the Courts of Rome, Spain, and St. James's, relating to the proposed alliance between Prince Charles and the Infanta. Fr. Gage suffered much, and finally died a prisoner in the Fleet, for the Faith.

Dame Mary Gage's kinsman, Thomas, joined the Order of Preachers in Spain, and began by exhibiting more than ordinary fervour and zeal. He was sent on a mission to the Philippines in 1613, but stopped short, without permission, on reaching the West Indies. Here he fell into habits of dissipation, and lost his vocation and his faith. On returning to England in 1637 he joined the Establishment, and was made Protestant Vicar of Deal. His life, after his fall, was devoted to the persecution of Catholics, several priests being betrayed by him to the pursuivants, and thus gaining the crown of martyrdom. Among these was Fr. Peter Wright, S.J., chaplain to his brother, Sir Henry Gage. This unhappy apostate died, apparently without repenting of his iniquities.—ED.

TO A DEAR FRIEND.*

AT your request, or rather upon your commandment, I will here declare that, in brief manner, which passed between God and me, in order to my conversion to the Catholic faith. Remember you, on the other side, the faithful promise, which you have made me of keeping it wholly to yourself; and upon that consideration I will instantly deliver you from any further suspense.

When I came to have about seven and twenty years of age I determined to put a purpose in execution, which I had entertained long, of seeing and spending some years in Italy, a country whereof I had heard and read much, and knew to be most remarkable for the delicacy of the situation, the fertility of the soil, the beauty of the cities, and the policy and civility of the people. Between me and this design many impediments had formerly interposed themselves, sometimes of studies, sometimes of diversion in court, sometimes of suits in law, and sometimes of other and idler entertainments; when these were diminished, if not

wholly removed; and I found them all to be resolved into the only difficulty of obtaining the consent of my parents.

I caused them to be moved first therein afar off, by third persons, who found them so averse from being content with this course, which I intended to take, as that I wished that they had not been acquainted with it, but that I had begun my travels without their knowledge rather than against their will. Yet then I took a middle way, and prayed them to give me leave to spend some six months in France, till the Parliament in England (wherein I had a place) should be re-continued, and in the meantime I might survey divers cities which in a former short journey of mine I had not seen; and might perfect the language of that country which already I had but even begun to learn; with promises that I would return at a prefixed time.

My father gave way at last to my earnest solicitations, though withal he charged me, even upon his blessing, that I should not transport myself so far as Italy or Spain. And my mother also was drawn to yield to my importunity, though greatly against her inclination, by reason of the great love which she bore me and the fervent desires wherewith her heart was overflowed to see

me settled at home in marriage; in which case she had often assured me that her fortune, which was no ill one, should be instantly mine.

I made a promise to my father that I would walk within the limits which he had prescribed; and to my mother, that her desires concerning me should not be frustrated long, for which purpose I intended to return again after a short time, though yet, I must confess, I meant nothing less than what I said. But God hath, I hope, forgiven me both that and greater sins, who afterward, with much power and goodness, called my soul to the knowledge of his truth, by occasion of this dissimulation of my tongue, and of the curiosity of my vain and curious mind.

What the reason might be why my father should so precisely interdict me the sight of those countries which I named before, I could not then resolve; but since, I have been of opinion that he thought me likely enough to lay hold upon Catholic religion, if I should once find myself in place where it were punctually professed and practised. But for my part I had not then any other thoughts, wherewith I might be troubled at that time, but how to pass the sea with speed.

I therefore leapt into the first boat I found, which had no sooner delivered me into France than

I committed myself to the best commodity of that country, which might conduct me soonest into Italy. Soon after, I arrived there; and I rested not till I came to Florence, a town whereof I can never think without tenderness, since God, in his good time, did there vouchsafe to call me to the communion of his holy Catholic Church, by opening the eyes of my dark soul, which had never been able until then to see the fair face of Truth; so mightily had it been overshadowed by the clouds of heresy and sensuality. His holy name be praised for ever and for ever! Amen.

But this conversion of mine succeeded not instantly after my arrival there, nor for the space of almost a year after. In the meantime I disposed of myself in conformity to my former desires. And first, you shall understand that I had not remained in those parts above three months, when I was unexpectedly found out by a letter from my father; the first sight whereof overjoyed me not, through the fear I had to be reproved, and threatened and peremptorily recalled home for having already exceeded my commission. But I was deceived in the better sense, for in all the days of my life his pen had never drawn the copy of his countenance towards me with a more agreeable and pleasing air; though yet withal I were quickly satisfied that

he wrote then to me rather out of discourse, and upon design than out of nature and affection; by occasion of a violent and general report, or rather rumour, of my being already grown a Catholic, which had filled the best places of London, almost as soon as I had found the way into Italy.

Now my father, for his part, either fearing this to be true, or that perhaps it might prove so at length, as, on the one side, he thought it inconvenient to cast me upon extremities by calling me then precisely home; so, on the other, he advised my return after some reasonable time, in a friendly and familiar manner; but yet conjured me strongly withal to be constant to my Protestant religion. Upon which condition he offered himself to me in terms, which might not only be extraordinary from an indulgent father, but even from an affectionate and equal friend.

The while, I was most glad to see that my fault was not only remitted, but my leave to stay abroad (and that in Italy) by a kind of connivance prolonged, and as for the matter of my being Catholic, I was very well able to make him set his heart at rest; for that God knows I had no more inclination at that time to profess that faith than now I have to forsake it. No marvel therefore if to the letters (which I weekly received out of England

with that news) I replied with often and serious protestations of the untruth thereof; though after (when indeed I was once a Catholic) it was eagerly objected against me as equivocating, which they account to be lying. But I take God to witness that I wrote at that time expressly and clearly what I then was, and meant to be; neither will it ever be found that, after I was once a Catholic, I denied myself to be such, either by word or writing to any creature.

That general rumour of my conversion bred nothing in me at that time but a care to purge, or rather preserve, myself, according to such occasions as might be offered. But now, when I am in my wits, I consider and confess that even such reports as those were accompanied with some kind of Providence towards me, and betokened perhaps the mercy of Almighty God, who bespoke me, as it were, by that means to be his servant; and ought, in all reason, to have awaked me, at least so far as to make me consider what it was to be a Catholic; what were the differences between that religion and the rest; and what grounds it also had, in virtue and strength; whereof I might so soon be thought likely to profess the same, in prejudice of my Protestant faith, to which I was obliged by advantages of all imaginable kinds.

It was not long after this, when God stirred up some English Catholic gentlemen of my acquaintance in that country, who held discourse to me sometimes in favour of Catholic religion. But I would not hearken then to those inspirations which God sent me by the diligence of his servants, who were also my particular friends. For I remember that two of them* were walking once with myself into certain villas to see the manner of the country, and to taste their fruits; and by accident we fell into a church, which chanced to be in our way; and it was that of Fiesole. They two did reverence to the Blessed Sacrament, and performed some short devotion of prayers, whilst I walked by. When they rose we went all together; and so, in a certain dark chapel, which stood behind the high altar, we found a countryman, retired and all alone, at his prayers. His countenance was very devout, and his words, though spoken softly, seemed yet to be uttered in great earnest; and his eyes were not less busy than his words, for the tears flowed down apace from them. Upon this, one of my camerades took occasion (with a serious mind, I think, but yet with a smiling face) to say that a man might have walked long enough amongst Protestants in

* Sir George Petre and Mr. Robert Cansfield. (MS.)

England, and especially in their country churches, and upon a working day in the afternoon, and in a retired and darkish kind of chapel, before he should have found a poor country fellow so earnestly at his prayers, which were accompanied with such tears as those. I heard him; and was extremely troubled that he had so easily asked me so hard a question, to which I was so unable to give a good answer. But yet I made the best I could of a bad game, which was by passing it over with a kind of scorn, and so I told him, profanely enough, that the old fellow had been chiding God Almighty for suffering his eggs to be stolen, or his coat or his staff, or I know not what of that kind. But yet, really, it troubled me, and not a little, that my friend had so much reason on his side; yea, and I thought a little then, and very much more afterwards when the blood was cool, that it would not be a matter of much ease in England to find such a person, in such an action as that for substance and for circumstance; whereof, though I saw then but one, yet I daily saw multitudes afterward.

Soon after I met also with another accident, and it was this: there came an English gentleman* to Florence from Naples, and he was not only a

* Mr. Partridge, Sir Henry Weston's nephew. (MS.)

Protestant, but of the purer sort. Now he, meeting me one day at dinner, we fell to the occupation of travellers, by asking many questions of one another; and so, in drift of speech, he told me that he had lately seen a very strange kind of thing at Naples; which was the liquefaction of certain hardened blood of one Januarius (who in Italian is called San Gennaro) upon the approach, and when it was brought into the presence of the head, which ordinarily was kept in another church of that city, as a relic, forsooth of the self same Saint. But he told me (as I was saying) that he saw that blood as hard as if had been a pumice-stone, with a straw which passed through it; and that he saw it also dissolve, and become, to all purposes, as blood, when it was once brought into sight of the head; and that afterwards upon removing it from the same head, it grew as hard again as before. And the world said generally there, that this was even done whensoever those two relics were brought together.

I cannot easily express how I was troubled, and half tormented with this. But I asked twenty questions, whether or no he saw all that which passed, very perfectly well? Whether others made the same judgment of it, when they saw it? Who the spectators were? What actions were per-

formed? What words they used?—and the like. And he answered me very clearly to all: that he saw it as distinctly as he saw mine eyes and my nose; that there were divers Protestants as well as Catholics in the place, and that one of the Protestants was a great English Earl's eldest son,* of a most illustrious family, and then of mighty hopes, many ways, and that he also acknowledged it to be most true. But yet, said this relater, there were priests, and surplices and candles and incense, and crossing, and Papistical praying, and a great deal of such foppery as that. And as it is, said he, most certain that the thing which I relate was done, so it is also not to be doubted but that it was by charms and witchcraft, and works of the devil.

I heard him; and withal I abhorred the historical part of what I heard; and was sorry with my whole heart that the cause, which I hated so much, had so good a piece of evidence as that; and I rebelled and chafed like a madman; though, by times, it made me think afterward that strange things were done in the world, though we knew not very well what they meant. But as for me, I was too incapable of receiving any good at that time. For whatsoever might chance to pass these mine eyes and ears of flesh and blood, they of my soul were

* The now Earl of Suffolk. (MS.)

directly blind and deaf, through the noise of vanity and sin; and I laboured with much more ambition to speak like an Italian than to believe like a Christian.

For the purpose of that tongue I remained so long at Siena (for thither I soon removed from Florence, to attain it so much the better, as I should be there more remote from the English) till I were able to express myself so far as to be able to converse in other places of my travels; though I intended but to touch there at that time; and therefore I passed then as unknown, taking the help of a name which was not mine own—though yet I lost my jest therein, for men knew that I was there as well as myself, as I came to understand afterward; though they who knew it then would needs be so civil as to dissemble it. Yet for the present I resolved quickly to be gone, and to make a much longer stay in my return.

I then went on towards Naples, but I had never been able to arrive at that journey's end if God's extraordinary and even most miraculous mercy had not (as I may well conceive) commanded my good Angel to save my life. For it was threatened by a certain accident, wherewith I will acquaint you now to the end that you may assist me in

giving thanks to his divine Majesty for so admirable a delivery.

Upon the [*sic*] of October in the year 1605, and upon the day and almost at the very arrival of a certain famous, great eclipse, at that time I was riding between Velleti and Sermoneta, towards Naples. Passing there, upon a bridge (the same being of a good height, over a torrent, which the furious tempest of that day had made to grow very much both in depth and strength) the hinder foot of my mule, by stepping sideward upon the wet and slippery stones of the bridge, fell down backward into the river, and I with him. Behold, and wonder at the manner of it. For I fell from that part of the bridge which answered below to the first entrance of the river, by means whereof my whole body lay under water, which saved me from being pressed and bruised to death; for the river was underlaid with a kind of rock, and my head remained above as it were upon a thick pillow of reeds, growing in the water, which delivered me also from drowning. Men came about me, to help me, as soon as they could, though it were not possible to be very soon, and we found that one of my spurs was broken, but my body, being made of softer metal, had no harm at all. This demonstration of so extraordinary a mercy of Almighty

God was wondered at by all them who beheld the spectacle, and they were very many. For the Bishop of Malta, with divers Cavaliers of that Order, passed then in our company towards their island, or rather (to speak more properly) we in theirs. And this only accident was cause enough in itself to have made me vow myself to the service of his Divine Majesty for ever after; whereas yet I considered much more where I might find a fire to dry my clothes, than how to secure myself from the fire of Hell, wherein my soul was undoubtedly, and instantly and eternally afterward to have been tormented, if the infinite mercy of God had not enabled me, by the prolongation of my life, to become a member of the holy Catholic Church, from which, at that time, I was a mere stranger at least.

But when I was come to Naples, there were also some English Catholic gentlemen who were careful to put good books into my hands. But neither they nor the fresh memory of so incomparable a benefit as I had there received of Almighty God, was yet of power to lead me on to make even the least pace towards any correspondence with him. For the delights of that place drew me violently on after them another way.

Yet there I had a certain odd encounter, and it

was this: Every day there passed once, and sometimes oftener, under my window, near a certain hour, a procession of little boys, singing the litanies of our B. Lady. And I know not by what chance, or rather Providence of Almighty God, the tune of that sweet verse, *Sancta Maria, Ora pro nobis*, came so often in at mine ears, and contented me so much that at length my tongue took it up; not indeed as a prayer (such was my misfortune at that time; for it is a misery to have been, at any time, other than our B. Lady's most humble servant) but as a song, whose ditty fell not unpleasingly to that air, and so, when I found myself alone, my usual entertainment would be to sing *Sancta Maria, Ora pro nobis*, in the tune of those babes and sucklings, who showed forth her praise. These would ordinarily fall out to be the last words before my sleep, and the first after it. And though I pronounced them, at that time, but like a parrot, yet those words made me grow into some few thoughts; and I considered now and then what hurt there might be, or not be, in desiring the Mother of God to pray for us; and at least I was enured thereby to pronounce them, not long after, as now I do.

In Naples I took no pains but to give myself pleasure enough. And so, when I had despatched

that business, and satisfied my curiosity with the sight of that city and the confines (which for delicacy I esteem to be, as it were, the very spring and source of that whole world which I had seen), I came back again to Rome, where I meant to spend as much of that winter as might stand with my convenience and safety. Now, by that time, I had, by way of letters and other means begun a kind of remote acquaintance with Father Persons; and so I had resolved to pass by mine own name, and in a more public way, when I should return. My chief reason for this acquaintance was to keep that cunning dark man (for so I esteemed him at that time) by that appearance of courtesy and respect from doing me any ill office, whereof certain persons (under the colour of much love to me, or rather perhaps, with the cloath [*sic*] of a little malice towards him) had put me into a vehement kind of fear. And next, out of a curious desire which I had, not to take him upon mere trust of others, but to know and converse a little, hand to hand, with a person of so much reputation throughout the world, for great experience and wisdom.

At length I came to Rome, and I visited Fa. Persons, and made my excuses for not having done it before, as I passed by. The worthy man received me with all humanity, and fell, at first, upon speech

of some near friends of mine, whom he had anciently known in England. After that, I well remember, he grew quickly into a general kind of discourse of the many journeys which I had made, of the variety of the countries where I had passed, of the customs which I might have observed, yea, and of the several religions which I might have met with, in divers places, and, finally of the beauty and dignity and illustrious antiquity of that province and place where then I was ; and this was all.

When I gave him a second visit, I remember also well that he took occasion from somewhat which was said of Savoy to speak much to me of the hideous rocks and mountains of that country, and with how extreme hazard and pains men were glad to climb, or rather indeed, to creep up by those inaccessible ways, to pick out handfuls of earth, which they might either plant or sow, for the getting of a miserable poor subsistence, and, as it were, to venture even their lives in one kind, that so they might save them, for some little time, in another. And if this (said he) be discreetly done for such a poor kind of life, as this is, how well must it deserve another manner of labour and care, when there is question of acquiring another kind of life, which is to be infinite and eternal.

Before we parted at that time, there grew to be

some speech of the King; and I remember very well that he spake with great respect of his Majesty, and with much praise of his virtues and parts; and was also very glad to hear many particulars, which I was able to tell him, in order to the same end. From thence he came, naturally enough, to touch upon Q. Elizabeth, as well in the way of her person, as of her government. And, indeed it appeared plainly that he admired not her very much; though yet he praised her intellectual parts in some kind. But he spake largely enough of such things as he thought to be defects, yea and public vices, in her. For my part I thought what I listed, though I held it not to be my business to convert him there. But he passed on from Q. Elizabeth, and took occasion to speak much of Q. Marie of Scotland, who had suffered so barbarous a death under the reign of that other Queen of ours, who yet indeed, said he, had no right at all in blood to that crown, but that it belonged ever wholly to the other. Upon that he fell into a more abstracted kind of discourse of the uncertainty and misery of this world, of the variety and contrariety of men's fortunes, and the success of their lives, &c. This he exemplified particularly in the persons of those two Queens; and he showed how together with that contrivance

of Q. Elizabeth in all her vanity and vice, from the very first to the last of her reign, she had lived still in abundance of prosperity and felicity, whereas yet Q. Marie of Scotland had spent almost twenty years of all the latter part of her life in the exercise of all Christian virtue, of humility, patience, charity, and piety, and suffered in that time so many disasters and sad accidents of seditions, surprises, rebellions, and huge personal indignities in her own country, and in ours of a perpetual captivity, which every day grew straiter than other, and was still accompanied with particular affronts, and scorns, and insolences, and (which yet was far more) with most sensible neglects; and finally with an abominable unjust trial for her life; and then, with the inflicting of a most savage death which fell upon her, by order of our state, from the hand of a base hangman; without their suffering her before to have so much as the comfort of a ghostly father; which act was yet (if it were possible) made both more odious and more infamous, even after her death, by the deformity of that hypocrisy, which Q. Elizabeth used, as if, forsooth, they had transgressed in the highest kind for ordering and directing that to be done, which the world knows very well to have flowed from her own inveterate hatred, though yet it might spring

partly from her guilty fear. So that, said Father Persons, since God is so perfectly just, and weighs us all in a most exact balance, and permits the accidents of this world to be carried in so unequal a way, and that here they many times suffer much who live with greatest care and practise virtue most; and they also, on the other side, who are most vain and vicious prosper best; there must needs be a Day of Judgment, when all accounts, whether of Princes or private men, will not fail to be cast up, and set straight, even to a hair. In such discourse as this that hour or two passed away.

But here I must not omit to speak of a certain diligence, which I held it fit for me to use in that place for the greater security of my person. For though already I had all cause to receive contentment in Fa. Persons, yet there wanted not some in Rome who wished me not to make myself too sure of him, and that he would, perhaps, play me some trick in the end. Now, as I believed not fully what they said, so yet could I not be sure that they were deceived, and therefore I desired to do my best to prevent the worst. So as then I resolved to present myself to some one of the prime Cardinals of the Inquisition, in such sort as I will instantly declare. And because I doubted much that I should hardly be able so to do it that Fa.

Persons would not be sure enough to know of it afterward, I thought that I might therefore proceed best for myself if I put a kind of obligation upon him, by telling him of it beforehand. I did so, and he not only approved, but did also applaud my conceit; and said that I should do prudently in it, and might thereby secure myself against the whole world. The Father told me also that he would give me, if I would, a guide and a companion for that purpose (because, indeed, he was not very well himself at that time) who should lead me to Cardinal Pinelli, a very worthy man and the Chief of the Congregation of the Inquisition, and who vouchsafed also to be a friend and favourer of his after a most particular manner. I thanked him; I accepted of the offer; he gave me Mr. Sweet to conduct me, and so, at the very instant, we went to wait upon the Cardinal. I told him (when I had performed my humble respects unto his Lordship) that I hoped he would not find it strange if I, being an Englishman, as I was, were of the same religion whereof that Kingdom made profession; that my occupation was to see countries, and especially that renowned city; that, as long as I lived there without committing any scandal, I would humbly desire and hope to enjoy the favour and benefit of his protection, and if that might not be

afforded, that he would yet vouchsafe to let me know his pleasure, that so I might retire myself without danger.

His answer was to this effect: that welcome was due to me as a stranger, but that, as I was an Englishman, I might expect and should receive a double welcome; both because that country had been formerly one of the dearest children of God's Church, as also for that it had not forsaken the Catholic faith out of heresy and election, but only by the imposition and power of temporal Princes, who had misguided themselves; that so long as I would converse there, without scandal I might promise myself the same security which I could expect at home, in any house of mine own; that if danger should be coming towards me (which yet, he said, could not arrive without his privity) he would be sure to enable me with means how to avoid it; that if, in the meanwhile, I would pass any part of my time with him, either within doors or abroad, his palace should be ever open to me, and his coach ever ready to attend me; that although he would oblige me to nothing, yet he would make one request to me, for mine own sake—namely, that, since I was a stranger, and a traveller, and had suffered my curiosity to lead me thither, I would be careful not only to view the antiquities of

the old decayed *Roman* Empire, but also of the not decayed Catholic *Roman* Church, which were there to be read in a fair letter, and in a large volume; that if men should endeavour to conceal the antiquity and excellency of that Church, the very stones might serve for preachers; and not only the buildings above ground, but even the very vaults and caves under it; and, in conformity hereof, he recommended to me very particularly those of St. Sebastian and St. Pancratius, to which I went soon after, with an extraordinary kind of curiosity.

So, as I did in that what I desired, and I must confess in the presence of God, that the sight of those most ancient crosses, altars, sepulchres, and other marks of Catholic religion, having been planted there in the persecution of the primitive Church (which might be more than fifteen hundred years ago, and could not be less than thirteen hundred) did strike me with a kind of reverent awe, and made me absolutely resolve to repress my insolent discourse against Catholic religion ever after.

But for the present, I did reverence to the Cardinal, and gave him most humble and entire thanks for the nobleness and favour of his proceeding towards me; and so I departed for that time, and waited upon him often afterward, according

to the occasion. And, finally I took my leave of him when I went away; and still he continued towards me in the self same way of civility; only he asked me if I had done what he had desired, by visiting the holy places aforesaid; and whether I went not out of Rome with better thoughts of the religion which was professed there than I had brought thither. I told him that I had done what he commanded, and, for the rest, that I was better informed of some things than I had formerly been; and that I would carry my heart open to the inspirations which it should please God to send me. In the meantime I professed myself to be extremely obliged to his Lordship for his great favour; and I humbly prayed him to behold me as a most faithful servant of his. And so we parted.

But the memory of his proceeding passed not from me, when I considered, as I do still, that many a High Commissioner or Justice of the Peace in England would perhaps, and even without perhaps, have looked upon a better man than myself if he had been a stranger and of a strange religion, and liable to his jurisdiction, after a much more severe and surly manner. For the Cardinal would never speak to me till I had put on my hat as soon as he; nor till I sat down in as good a chair as his; and whensoever I parted from him, he accompanied

me two or three rooms from his own, and with a countenance if it were possible, which even made the sauce better than the meat. By this means I had procured to make it most perfectly safe for me to stay as long as I would in Rome, from whence, when my occasions should call me (which was not likely to be during three months at least), I intended to go towards Florence, to make a much longer residence there.

In the meantime, during my stay at Rome, my pleasures and vain curiosities took up the greatest part of my time; though yet such hours as I could spare I was glad to bestow upon Fa. Persons, whom I thanked in most particular manner for the address which he had given me to the Cardinal, wherein he also rejoiced. And daily he procured to put new courtesies and civilities upon me, and desired (upon my profession) that I would requite the good will which he had to serve me, by casting an eye at idle hours upon such a Catholic book as he would send me, by the same friend of mine, Mr. Sweet, who was a great dependent of his, and to whom I had much obligation from much of his good company at that time. Now this book is one of them, which Mr. William Reynolds* wrote, and

* William Rainolds (1544?-1594) a convert from the Church of England. *His Refutation of sundry Reprehensions, &c.* (the book referred to) was published at Paris, 1583.—ED.

it is called, as I remember, his Reprehension of Dr. Whitaker. I promised to read both that and whatsoever else Fa. Persons should recommend to me; though my idle and worse courses made me slack in my performance at that time.

Yet to keep my negligence from his knowledge my custom was at the instant (whensoever I went to visit the good Father) to open the book which he had lent me, in three or four several places, thereby to enable myself to propound some few questions or doubts, that so he might conceive I was not wholly careless of what he advised. And thus I hoped that I had only circumvented him, though I quickly found afterward that it was myself whom I had deceived most. For besides the hurt which I did myself, in order to mine own soul, it deprived me for a time of reading one of the most excellent books, even for wit and good discourses, that ever I saw, and especially in respect of the Preface, which is both very large and perfect in the proof of that to which it drives; and I wish that the world would so peruse it as thereby to make it wholly their own.

But the shift which then I made to cozen me even of myself could not long serve my turn against such a man as Fa. Persons was, in such a cause as his; and so, in after conferences (for by that

time he was grown to speak clearly to me) he convinced my understanding in many things, wherein yet I profess that I do not so much as mean to praise him much or to flatter him at all. For the truth and certainty of Catholic doctrine is such that I hold it at this day the greatest miracle of the whole world that a man who is in any way of a judgment and will which is not mightily depraved, can forbear to subscribe entirely to the truth of Catholic doctrine, and to acknowledge his obedience to the holy Catholic Church, upon that kind of conference and proof, which he may easily hear thereof, within the space of a very few hours, from any Catholic learned man.

But now the Father proved to me, by a most evident demonstration out of St. Thomas (as evident as it is that two and two make four, though at the first it may perhaps seem to some but a kind of impossible and ridiculous paradox), that whosoever believes not all the points of Catholic doctrine hath no supernatural faith at all in any one of them. Because such a person wants the true and formal reason of faith, which only is and only can be, the revelation of God's truth, propounded by the Catholic Church to be believed; which Church, if it teach two doctrines or twenty or two hundred, if a man will not believe any one of all that

number, it is evident that he believes not any of the rest, upon the said formal reason of faith, which is the revelation of God, propounded by that Church, which Christ, our Lord, hath instituted and established, since the same authority extends alike to all the other articles which she propounds. But he doth it, either upon the discourse of his own reason, or spirit, which perhaps he will miscall the Holy Ghost, or upon his own idle interpretation of Holy Scripture, which he will not stick to call the Word of God; or else upon the credit which he gives to some modern sectary, or other, which he will needs conceive to be, forsooth, the Congregation of the elect, or faithful; or, in a word, upon some such fallible and false motive as one of those; which is a foundation so slippery or so sandy as no article of faith (which must needs be certain, or otherwise it can be no true faith at all) is ever to be established thereupon.

In the second place he showed me out of the Fathers of the first four hundred years after Christ our Lord (which I knew to be within that time wherein the English Protestants confess the Church to have been incorrupt) that prayers to Saints, prayers and sacrifice for the dead, *limbus patrum*, justification by faith and works, the preferring of virginity before matrimony, the necessity

of baptism, the sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ our Lord, which is the mass, the Catholic canon of Holy Scripture, the lawfulness and frequent use of vows, and the other doctrines which are controverted at this day between Catholics and Protestants, were all embraced and believed by the Catholics of those times, as they are now by them of these.

And here he gave me also a most excellent rule: that whensoever any writer or Father (either by way of expounding Scripture, or else by way of recommending or declaring the practice of the Church of his time, or upon any other occasion whatsoever) did set on foot any doctrine which was contrary to the ancient tradition and judgment of the holy Catholic Church of his time, he was presently rebuked and confuted, by the other Fathers of that present age. And this proposition he exemplified in the persons of Tertullian, St. Cyprian, and the most learned Origen. And he showed that whensoever any doctrine was affirmed by any of the Fathers which was not contradicted or controlled by any other of the same, or the next succeeding age, it might serve us for an assurance that the said doctrine was no innovation, or particular opinion of that private Father, but expressed by him upon such occasions

as then were ministered, in the sense and spirit of the holy Catholic Church of Christ our Lord. Nay, it is not only so, as he said, whensoever one of the Fathers hath differed from another in any point of doctrine, but even when they have earnestly varied in the interpretation of some important part of Scripture. For they were not then wont to fail to express home enough what they thought, and therein, said he, let that serve for good proof which occurred between St. Hierome and St. Augustine about the reprehensibleness of St. Peter by St. Paul.

He represented to me also then in a third place, how the Fathers of the aforesaid ages did not only agree with the present Catholics in those articles which are received at this day by the Protestants, and which I have already pointed out, but did also condemn all heretics in general, as incapable of salvation, and consequently all such persons as either in ancient, or any other times did obstinately profess any one of those, or any other heresy at all. And to prove that assertion he showed me (besides the practice of those ancient Fathers) their express authorities also, which are plentifully set forth in many of their writings, to prove that not only heretics but even schismatics also (who only refuse Church discipline) can never be saved except they

do penance for that sin, although they should sell and dispose of all their substance to the poor, yea, and sacrifice their very lives for the exaltation and honour of the name of Christ our Lord, in contradiction of the impiety of the Pagans. And he showed me also divers catalogues, and namely those of St. Epiphanius and St. Augustine, wherein the heresies both of those and of the former times were set down, amongst which there are divers which are held by Protestants at this day, whereas yet St. Augustine declares that whosoever holds any one is not so much as a *Christian;* and therefore that, without repentance, he cannot possibly be saved.

I remember also that once he invited me to dine with him at the College-Vineyard; where, after he had entertained me with other speech of several kinds, he abruptly desired leave to let me see what the judgment of St. Augustine was concerning Purgatory. And he opened many clear and large discourses to me, whereby it was not only apparent that he taught this doctrine, but that, in the judgment of this Saint, those pains were incomparably greater than all the torments of this life. I wondered then at the reason why Fa. Persons should press me so far (who was yet so very much unprepared) with a point which ordinarily seems

to be of so much discomfort, and from the belief whereof I had really ever found an extraordinary aversion in myself. But the wise religious man did partly work (as it should seem) upon the reverent respect which I professed to carry unfeignedly towards that mirror of grace and nature, the great St. Augustine, and partly also, perhaps, upon his own consideration not so much of what I was then as what I was likely to be afterwards, when I should give greater care to God's inspirations. For, indeed, as the belief of Purgatory is a thing which careless Protestants cannot endure, so men who have grown to a moderate conceit of Catholic religion are easily brought to infer, by the pains of Purgatory, which are inflicted sometimes upon men of the most virtuous sort, that the torments of hell, which are prepared for profane and unrepentant sinners, are not only beyond the power of man's patience to support, but even of his conceit to apprehend. And though, when I was a Protestant, I often thought within myself that I would never be a Roman Catholic, if it were but only in respect of their believing the doctrine of Purgatory which I accounted to be so discomfortable and severe, yet afterward, when I meant to become a Catholic indeed, and much more when I was entirely of that profession, I really found the same to be of

most extraordinary comfort, and one of the fittest of all others to keep a fearful soul from despair. For whosoever seriously considers his own weakness and frailty, together with his wickedness and malice, as also the infinite majesty and the unspeakable purity of Almighty God, and that his justice in the punishment of sin is no less infinite than his mercy in forgiving it, will hardly be able to entertain any lively hope that he may come to enjoy the kingdom of heaven, unless, after this life, there be some place, established and believed, wherein the souls of men may be purged from those penalties which are due to such sins as are committed, and were not expiated in this world. For as in nature *non datur transire ad extrema, nisi per media*, things cannot pass from one extreme to another, without touching upon the mean or middle way; so in things which are of grace, and do supernaturally concern the soul, it is a most profane and foolish gross conceit that men may proceed from the carnal pleasures of this life to the spiritual and immortal joys of heaven, unless first they become subject to the state of penances, which must be undergone, either in this or in the other life; and so may serve both for the purification in respect of the sensualities, which are past, and for a preparation and a disposition also

for the felicity and immortality thereof, which is to come.

But to return at length to myself, the good and prudent Father did work so powerfully by these means upon my understanding, while I was yet at Rome, that, if I had not wilfully drawn the curtain between it and my will and made myself more incapable of God's great mercy by so dissolute and careless a life as I led, I am half persuaded that perhaps I might have departed from thence as true a Catholic, as it is certain that I was by that time, grown, in my judgment, to be no very earnest Protestant. And howsoever I found myself to be in great obligation to esteem and honour Fa. Persons for his other many courtesies and virtues, and especially for his desire to inform me of that which did concern me most, yet the ingenuous and noble manner, wherewith he endeavoured it, was that which most affected me then; since in all the time of my abode there, he never urged me expressly to any alteration of my opinion; no, nor yet did he so much as importune me to know whether my judgment was satisfied by his discourse or no, but prayed me only that I would make the search of true religion my greatest business; and exhorted me in a most grave and most prudent and a most pious manner to resign myself wholly into the

hands of Almighty God, and to beseech him by often and earnest prayers that he would enable me to find and follow that Church, that faith, and that religion, which alone he came to live and die to plant; and which would only be able to save my soul. And upon this, with many assurances from him of his prayers, and from me of my service, I took leave.

But now God, who wrought upon me by his unsearchable ways, and followed me on so close with his endless mercies, instead of punishing all my negligences and offences, vouchsafed to condescend to my infirmities, and permitted me still to be nourished in that insatiable desire of the perfection of the Italian tongue, and other idle qualities, which I loved as well as any fool would dote upon a fine bauble; to the end whilst I was laying hold upon no more but the very bark of the tree, he might secretly insinuate and distil into my soul that juice and fruit, which should afterwards direct, refresh and save it.

First, then, after my return to Florence, I resolved to live out of the company of all English, and I did not so much as except the dearest friends I had; and I lodged myself in a kind of remote quarter of the town, and in a house where no countrymen of mine did ever come. I met them

sometimes abroad, but taught them not the way home to me. I frequented plays, and worse places. I went equally to the mountebanks and to preachers. I read also books of all kinds, and very often such as were of the lightest air; as comedies whose matter not affecting the mind much, the words would both come quicklier, and stick closer to it. For the language was that mistress which I resolved most to court at that time. But howsoever I spent my days vainly, yet the evenings made a kind of amends. For they put me more in mind of myself, and my heart would be very sober, when I came home, though it used to be half drunk when I was abroad. The Carnival grew also then to an end; and Lent began, the very face of which time, in those parts, makes men less dissolute than they were. And so I had no longer been a few weeks alone, but that by frequenting sermons, which I continued to hear out of curiosity, and by settling myself upon a more virtuous and recollected way of life, or rather upon one that was less vicious; and my recommending my soul to God by prayer (though it were but seldom and faintly made) it pleased his Divine Majesty to alter the object of mine eyes, which till then had wandered throughout the corners of the world (for *oculi stultorum in finibus terrae*), and to turn them inward upon

myself. And so I began to consider what I was; how I lived; what I believed; what account I were able to make, if then I should be called to give it up. Withal he gave me grace to ponder the extent of man's soul, to which all God's creatures can give no full satisfaction at all; the miseries of this life; the uncertainty of death; the strictness of the Judge; the immutability of the sentence; and, in a word, the great danger wherein I was to be tormented in the fire of hell, and not only to be deprived of God, but to blaspheme him; and that eternally; for ever and for ever, as long as God himself was to be God.

These considerations cast me often into so great perplexity, and anxiety of mind, as drew me, in short time, to be half asking that question—*Domine, quid me vis facere?* I knew that religion was the foundation of all Christian life; that without true faith it was impossible to please God. I considered that the world was so extremely divided in the judgment which it made of true and false religions in this age, every man pretending for his own, and censuring, excommunicating, and even damning such as differ from it. I knew that falsehood might be infinite, but that truth could be but One. And I reflected upon the novelty of the Protestant faith, and the motive which Luther

had in Germany, and King Henry in England, and how different they were both from one another. And I was not then also to learn that till about a hundred years before, the Catholic religion had been embraced in all these Northern provinces of the world, where now so many sorts are seen to reign.

I examined in that good library of St. Mark's in Florence (for that exquisite library of St. Laurence is too strictly kept) those passages of the ancient Fathers, which had been already showed me at Rome, and whereof I had taken and kept some notes. And I did not only find them to be as they were there alleged, but in looking for them I met with many more unlooked for, which gave me sufficient assurance that Protestancy was not only a mere innovation, but a damnable kind of novelty in the judgment of the whole primitive Church. For though their names were not known at that time, yet the heresies, which they now profess, were condemned then; and particularly I was much taken by studying that excellent tract of St. Augustine, *De Unitate Ecclesiae*, where I found that the Donatists pretended to defend their errors, not only by texts of Scripture, as the Protestants do, but even by many of the self same texts of Scripture which are used by them now for

that purpose. And that, on the other side, that holy Father did confute them, and prove the Catholic to be the true Church of Christ our Lord, by the universality thereof, with the same passages and texts, which the Catholics bring at this day against the Protestants.

The reading of that book and others of that holy Father, wherein so honourable mention is made of the Church of Christ our Lord, sometimes speaking of the continual visibility thereof in her pastors and doctors, sometimes of her miracles, sometimes of her conversion of Pagans, of her sanctity, of her perpetuity, of her visibility, and sometimes of her infallibility, gave me reason then to think, yea and more than think, that I might safely trust my soul in her hands who Christ our Lord himself had made the supreme judge of our controversies, and protested that the very gates of hell should never be able to prevail against her. So that my resolution was to pursue the search of that true Church, and it was little sooner sought than found. So truly it was foretold by the prophet Esay that the ways of serving God in the days of the Messias should be so very plainly discovered and so easily discerned, *ut stulti non errarent per eam*, that even fools should not be deceived in the search thereof.

And not only my understanding being shortly then convinced, but my will beginning also to be well inclined, I fell about that time into acquaintance with some devout Italian gentlemen, and so I made no difficulty to accompany them sometimes to certain Spiritual Congregations; wherein I saw the exercise of such solid and massy virtue practised; such devotions used; and so great penances performed; and all carried with such secrecy and absence of all ostentation, that I was filled with admiration in respect of them, and with confusion in regard of myself.

Upon these occasions and examples, the mercy of Almighty God inspired me to become wholly his; but my heart, by the long habit of sin, was rusty, and would by no means learn how to walk in the holy way of his will. But my resistance cost me dear; for I grew thereby into an unspeakable desolation of mind, and so I continued divers days and weeks; till, at length, the Devil, or else mine own bad inclination (which was almost as much mine enemy as he), suggested a conceit to me, which for a while I took as current, but soon after (as it were in despite almost of mine own very heart) I was forced to confess that it was but counterfeit.

For thus it said: that although I were then grown

to conceive the Catholic to be the true religion of Christ our Lord, yet I was not bound at that time to embrace and perform the same; that my opinion was grounded upon the information of one only party or side; that the world would tax me of indiscretion, if I should precipitate myself, in a matter of so great importance; that howsoever God were delighted in the zeal of his servants, yet he was also well content not to have them fools; and therefore I had heard that one of the ingredients to the sacrifices to the old Law was salt, which is the symbol of discretion; that when I should return either into France or England, I might hear the learned men of both religions discuss the controversies thereof; and so build a more solid and permanent election thereupon. I gave most grateful audience to this motion, and thought it to be founded in all justice and reason; and so my mind was restored to his former peace for a while.

But Woe to them who cry Peace where there is no peace. The enemies of my soul had a meaning to betray me with a kiss, as Judas did his master. For this pretence had nothing in it of reason but only the appearance and mask, which the mercy of Almighty God (who never abandoned me any further than only to let me see how little I was able to do without him) did give help to enable

me to discharge. And so it represented to me by way of answer: that I was not such a stranger in the understanding of Protestant doctrine as the objection did presume; that although perhaps I might be ignorant of what could be pretended in some particular controversy, yet I knew the grounds and principles thereof well enough; and my conscience told me with a loud voice that they were of no validity at all; for they cannot so much as pretend to have any lawful succession of priests and pastors not interrupted, who have preached and taught their doctrine from the Apostles downward till these times; that Luther and Calvin professed to have been extraordinarily called by Almighty God for the reformation of the Church, and yet showed no miracles, which have always been the seals, which must necessarily be annexed to such high commissions as those; that although the Protestants were all departed out of the Church of Rome, yet the Lutherans continued in deadly wars against the Calvinists, *et e converso;* differing both in the canon of Holy Scriptures, the question of the real presence in the Eucharist, and many other most important articles of Christian faith, whereof many books are full, and in conformity hereof, did excommunicate one another as heretics; that they confess their Congregations not to be infallibly

assisted by the Holy Spirit of Almighty God; and that, if they *may* fall into error, men cannot be assured but that they *do;* that some of them teach that there is no necessity for the Church of Christ to be always visible to the eyes of men; and that the rest, who hold it to be necessary, are yet not able to show that visibility but only in the Church of Rome, which they are forced to profess (though most absurdly) to be the same Church with theirs; that the commandments of God are directly impossible to be kept, even with His grace; which seemed to me to be a barbarous and blasphemous opinion; that the counsels of Christ our Lord concerning voluntary poverty and abnegation of the will, which I found not only to be professed but practised by so many Fathers of the ancient Church, were continued by the Roman Catholics at this day, and rejected and derided by all Protestants, as both unlawful and absurd; that there was no infallible judge of controversies in religion amongst them; and that, howsoever they would seem to be ruled by Holy Scripture, yet in truth it was but their own private interpretation thereof which they received, and that, to crown both their heresy and their folly, they protest men to have no free will in accepting and rejecting that grace, which is imparted to the soul of man by the liberal hand of Almighty God.

These, and many other particulars did offer themselves at this time, so clearly to my understanding and consideration, that, if ever my soul were satisfied in discerning the direct falsehood, and extreme absurdity of their grounds, it was chiefly and most expressly then. For then did I conceive myself to see them even, as it were, more distinctly with my understanding than I could visibly have seen any sensible object with mine eye. For I saw them not discursively one by one, but they were represented to me all together, as in a most bright glass, in such a manner as really I am not able to express how very, very exact I found the thing to be. And I saw, with extreme horror and abomination, of how unequal and deformed parts that other monstrous body of heresy did consist.

Now to those things which Protestants do most improbably profess. I also laid the consideration of some such qualities and conditions as I most easily found to belong to the true Church of Christ our Lord, which they could not, with any appearance, apply to theirs; and I will reflect upon them here again, though partly they were touched before. As namely; that it was prophesied she was to be universally spread over the whole world; that she should be as visible as a mountain set upon a plain; that her light should never fail; that she

was to be the converter of nations and Gentiles from idolatry; that kings should be her nursing-fathers, and queens her nursing-mothers; that eternally there should be a clean and pure sacrifice offered up to Almighty God in this Church. And I saw with the very eye of my soul that all these predictions, and many others, had been and were still most evidently fulfilled in and by the holy Catholic Church, communicating from time to time with the successor of St. Peter, the Bishop of Rome, and not one of them by any other at all. And I held myself therefore to be wholly inexcusable before Almighty God, if, upon the affectation of such a dangerous, yea, and foolish kind of wisdom, I should defer my conversion to his Divine Majesty; and that if, in the meantime, he should call me to give account of myself upon a short warning, I might justly and most worthily fall into the hands of his justice, for having neglected to make better use of his unspeakable mercy.

So that now I proposed fully to become a Catholic, and that with speed; when the enemy of my soul, who never slept, assaulted me yet in another kind. For then he laid before me how impossible a thing it would be for me to reform that disordered life of mine; the temporal vexations and afflictions which I was likely to incur by

this means; the confiscation of what I then possessed; the most certain deprivation of whatsoever I might expect in future times; the blasting of my poor reputation, which ill tongues would take from me at their pleasure; the loss of my friends, of my liberty, and peradventure also of my country; yea, and perhaps (as the times were then set) an odious and ignominious death, when I should return to England, for persuading some man to be a Catholic, or perhaps for relieving some priest.

These things, I say, he laid before me, and set them out in so fresh and lively colours that they seemed rather bodies than pictures in the eyes of mine imagination. For I take the Blessed Trinity and all the glorious Court of Heaven to witness that, through the mighty and most powerful impressions which were made upon my perplexed mind by these temptations (though partly also they proved to be predictions) I verily thought myself and that at several times (through the uncontrolled progress of my imagination) not to be as I was then, at Florence, and at liberty, but at London and in prison; and that from thence I was to be carried at Tyburn, there to suffer death for the confession and profession of my faith.

And at the issue out of these conflicts, which

were many, I was wont to find myself all overgrown with sweats, and overlaboured with extreme and most discomfortable palpitations of the heart; though yet, I humbly thank Almighty God, they did my body much more hurt than my mind. For the fits were no sooner past but I found myself, through his grace, not only comforted but re-integrated in my former resolutions, and I rendered to his Divine Majesty most profound and cordial thanks for giving me even then, rather a desire than a dislike to suffer anything which could happen for so great and so glorious a cause.

Neither did the circumstance of that time detain me at all from making myself a Catholic, the discovery of the Powder-treason having succeeded but four or five months before. For that happened in November, and this in the February following. But as, on the one side, I was not so very simple as to translate the crime of men to the religion which they professed, and which, I knew, had read them no such lesson as that (and therefore whosoever serves himself of such objections may be thought rather to frame than find excuses for their own faults), so, on the other side, I was far from thinking myself too good to run the same fortune with that Church, which was to be my mother; and to take my part of that slander which is

raised against her, upon unjust occasions by foolish and malicious persons, in making her the friend and favourer of such bloody and barbarous designs.

The reformation of my life, whereupon I must then be sure to resolve (for else, to become a Catholic were to have called myself fool by craft, and as good never a whit as never the better), did through the mercy of Almighty God, not foreslow my conversion to him at all. For I knew that he gave sufficiency of grace to all men, for the amendment of their lives, if they would not be extremely wanting to themselves, I saw that even miracles had been brought upon many others, who yet were formerly in most desperate case; and I meant not to disoblige Almighty God by despair, who, if he fed even his very enemies with drops, would not fail to furnish his faithful servants and true sons with full vessels of his holy grace. So that now, being resolved to accept and cherish God's assistance, through the same assistance it seemed even to my understanding that the holy sacraments of Christ our Lord, which are the conveyances of the merit of his most precious blood and passion to men's souls, would more easily be able to make me chaste of carnal, than his inspirations had already made me resolve to become Catholic of Protestant.

But then, two main and mighty pieces of artillery were brought by that enemy of God and man to batter and beat down my good purposes—the love of my parents, and the detestation which I had of a great person in England,* who had long done me the honour to hate me, and to express it upon all occasions, and particularly to do me as I conceived, injustice, in a part of my fortune.

By the first, he suggested to me what an ill-conditioned a man I was, to keep so bad quarter with them, to whom I was so closely bound by nature, and who did so tenderly and dearly love me; that for me to become a Catholic was, after a sort, to take life from them who were the authors of mine; nay, that it were more courtesy in me to cut their throats when they were asleep than thus to make them the example and instance of misfortune, yea, and the very by-word and proverb of all such as knew them; that, at least, if I were resolved to take this course, I was bound, in all humanity, to do it gently and by degrees, and not to cast them *per saltum* into such extremity of discomfort and desolation.

In the second place, he showed me the disadvantages which mine enemies would grow to have upon me by this means; and especially that

* Robert Cecil, Lord Salisbury, as afterwards appears.—ED.

great person whom I touched before; that he would be able to hold that part of my estate from me, with much ease, wherein I had told him (before I came out of England) that he usurped wrongfully upon my right; that he would also cast the rest of my fortune before any beggar, who were desirous to take it up; that he would not only do me this hurt, but take extreme contentment in crushing me; and how would my heart endure, without swelling till it would break, to put my head under his feet; who would ask no better than to beat out my brains? and therefore that for my part I would almost be rather damned afterwards than be so insolently destroyed then; that at least I should do discreetly to continue a Protestant till I had settled my affairs in England, whither I might do well to make haste; and so provide for the saving of my soul without any temporal ruin, and without making myself a sacrifice to such a person as had the fire of malice in his heart, and means enough in his hand to consume me with it in an instant.

These were the arguments and temptations of that old serpent, Satan, which howsoever they were not in themselves so very subtle as some others were, yet they wanted not force with me. And really for *argumenta ad hominem* they were such as my passionate and weak nature could least tell

how to answer or to overcome. I was easily able to say to myself (though even that little was not to be thought without the help of God's Holy Spirit), *Qui diligit patrem aut matrem plus me non est me dignas;* and again, *Qui non tollit crucem suam non potest meus esse discipulus.* But it was one thing to discourse, and another to practise so high and hard points of Christian doctrine; especially for such a novice as I was.

But *fidelis Deus*, who suffered me not to be tempted beyond my strength, which only consisted in the knowledge of mine own weakness; and the conscience thereof made me fly to him for help, which he gave me grace to beg with a sad, contrite heart, to the end that he might not despise it; and not only to crave it by myself, but by the intercession of the immaculate and ever-blessed Virgin, to whom I was already grown to bear some little devotion, and had resolved to become one man of those *generations of people* which (by the prophecy of the Holy Ghost, proceeding from her own sacred mouth) were *to magnify her most glorious name.* And I found incredible comfort in my prayers to her; and so, after some very few days, God gave me grace to resign myself into his holy hands; and that not like an usurer, who would put out his money into a bank, but as a Christian

ought, to the service of his God, without capitulation or reservation. And (to his own eternal glory be it spoken) I produced, by his grace, an act of resolution, that, come life or death, riches or poverty, honour or shame, the grief of friends or the contentment of such as were not so, I would instantly humble myself to the yoke of Christ our Lord, renouncing all the errors of my belief, and desiring to be received into the unity of the holy Catholic Roman Church, and resolving also by his grace to live his servant during life. And it was strange to see (at best it seemed so to me) how, immediately after this act, I was delivered from all reluctation of mind. Only the next day, when I went to put my purpose in execution, I fell strangely into the street several times, which I had never used to do, and having dirted my clothes extremely (for it had rained much) a temptation came upon me and said: That my action was not likely to be happy, and, howsoever, that I should do discreetly to put off the business till another day. But my Good Angel, I think, forbade me to allow of the motion; and so I liked better to wear a foul cloak upon my back than a filthy soul in my body.

And so I went on to a good, religious, Italian Father, of the Society of Jesus, called Padre Lelio

Ptolomei, by whose sermons I had been greatly edified that Lent; and I told him that as I had been bred in Protestancy, so now, by God Almighty's grace, I had discovered the danger and falsehood of that religion; that I was resolved already that the Catholic Church, communicating with the Bishop of Rome, was the only true Church, and Spouse of Christ our Lord, as being purchased by his blood, adorned with infinite privileges, and assisted by the infallible Spirit of his truth, out of which there was no salvation. I therefore craved at his hands that, with all convenient speed, he would inform me what I was to do, before I might be incorporated into that Church, and that he would satisfy me also in the meantime about some few doubts, of less importance, which I still retained.

The Father did first congratulate with me, in dear terms, by reason of the great mercy, wherewith Almighty God had preferred me, in this occasion, to the Catholic faith before so many thousands of my country. He then exhorted me to give most entire and humble thanks to his Divine Majesty for so inestimable a benefit. He said, moreover, that although I had a strong purpose to become a Catholic, and that upon the day following I might be received into the bosom of the

Church, yet I should do well in the meantime to recommend myself with much instance to our Blessed Lord, that so he might give me grace to put my holy purpose in execution; forasmuch as it was ever the devil's use to assault men with his most importunate and powerful temptations, when he found them nearest to their conversion; that concerning those particulars wherein I desired to receive satisfaction, he was ready to give it most completely then, if I would needs persist in my demand; but yet that he rather advised me (since I believed already, as formerly I had expressed, concerning the Church of Rome—namely, that she was the true Church of Christ our Lord, and that she could not err, and it must therefore be necessarily intended that she did not err in those particulars, whatsoever they were) not to diminish the virtue and merit of my faith by not fully believing all her doctrines, till the reason of my understanding were absolutely and particularly convinced, but rather that I would *Captivare intellectum in obsequium fidei*, according to the counsel of St. Paul, till such time as I should be received into the Catholic Church; and that afterwards I might with a curiosity less demeritorious (and rather for the explicating than actuating of my faith, or, indeed, for the instruction of others

rather than for the settling of mine own conscience) both seek and find solutions to all objections, both concerning those and whatsoever other articles, which are professed and taught by the holy Catholic, Apostolic, Roman Church.

His discourse seemed so very reasonable to me that I thought myself bound to yield to it. And so I agreed to his appointment of a certain hour, which he named, of the next day following. At which time he conducted me to the Inquisitor, by whom I was received and embraced, with all charity and courtesy; and instantly I abjured all my heresies, and he absolved me from them.

The Father of the Society conducted me then immediately to the Annunciata, which is a church of great devotion in Florence, and where our Blessed Lady is much honoured and served; and there did he offer me up to her gracious intercession and protection, and advised me very earnestly to continue in her devotion till death. And so, for that time, he dismissed me from his presence, but not from his care. For I was almost daily with him for ten days after, in which time I prepared myself to make my general confession; and he admitted me soon after to the Blessed Sacrament of the altar. And he conjured me, at that very time, that for God's sake, and mine, and

his, I would dispose myself to grant his earnest suit, of purposing, by God's grace, to confess and communicate weekly whilst I lived. He assured me that I might be happy by that means; that the chimney would be easily swept, and without any trouble at all, if it might be so often done; and that I would thank him in heaven for giving me so good counsel as that. I gave him most humble thanks, and I made him that faithful promise, and I have performed it, and I find that hitherto he hath also been as good as his word. He willed me also to hope for such a benediction thereby as had happened by the same means to a near and dear friend of his, who found himself free by the space of very many whole years from so much as the consenting thought of some one particular sin, to which (till he had been nourished by that Bread of Angels) he was so desperately abandoned as to remember well that before, for a long time together, he had approached it as a very sentence of death, to be restrained from committing it, I say not for the space of years or months, but even of two or three days.

And this is that which you desired to know touching my conversion; but now you must not refuse to go on with me, yet a little further, where I will give you a clear view upon the extraordinary

mercy, which Almighty God showed towards me, in that which followed, concerning those difficulties, which threatened me before I was a Catholic, and which afterwards were partly diminished, partly altogether removed, and partly changed into their contraries by growing to be my comforts in a high degree.

About half a year after I became a Catholic, I returned into England, and, passing both through France and Flanders, I fell into the company of a noble English gentleman, who was also a Catholic, and disposed himself then, with a friend or two, besides his servants, to go home; as I myself did with mine. We passed the sea together, and as we went by Canterbury in our way to London we had an equal desire to bestow a second view upon that goodly church; for we both had seen it once before. We did so; and amongst other things we were shown that very chair wherein St. Thomas of Canterbury sat, when he was brought to that see. It was not kept, as I conceive in memory of his translation alone, but as having been used at the consecration or translation of all the Archbishops of that church. And it was covered with a kind of cloth, though not by way of devotion, but of decency. Now when my camerades were entertaining themselves otherwise, I passed from under

the cover into the chair, and there kneeling down upon the seat, I recommended myself to Almighty God, by the prayers of his dear servant, that great Saint, with as much earnestness as, I think, I ever used in my whole life; beseeching him for his own mercies' sake to lay the consideration of my great sins aside, and to vouchsafe to take care of me, and to protect me, and direct me in so great a business as I was then going about, which was the professing of the holy Catholic faith in a country where a contrary religion did so abound; and by which the Catholic was suppressed. And I earnestly (as I was saying) interposed the intercession of the glorious St. Thomas, towards the obtaining of that great mercy of Almighty God, that so I might rather die a thousand deaths than do the least imaginable act against the holy Catholic faith. And some such thing did happen to me afterwards as made me think I knew, my prayer was heard and granted by that Saint, or rather by Almighty God through his intercession.

In the meantime I went out of the chair, and restored myself to the company, which either had not missed me in that short time, or, at least, had no cause to think that I had retired myself out of any more than mere curiosity. For I was careful to keep it from their knowledge that I was a

Catholic as if they had not been men of honour, but even pursuivants. Nor had I ever, to my remembrance, imparted it to any man of my nation, but only in Italy; and there but to a very few; and that also both long after my conversion, and upon very great trust. But when we were come up to London, we went every one his way; and I only desired that favour of them, that till we should meet afterwards, they would not take knowledge to anybody that I was come over to England.

For my part I lodged myself for some days at a private French ordinary at the East end of London, near the Tower; from whence I wrote a letter to a noble and great friend of mine, Sir Francis Bacon, a kinsman, and friend, and servant to my Lord of Salisbury, who then was Secretary Cecil, though he had not the title of Salisbury at that time. This letter was made monstrable by me of purpose, and it went to this effect: that by his means I presented my humble services to his Lordship; that I knew he was a great minister of State; that he had long hands wherewith to reach, and open ears wherewith to hear from one end of the world to the other; that it was impossible for me to have done anything of moment, in any kind, whereof he might not have had notice; that through the desire which many would have to tell him, or else of

making, news, it was no impossible thing but that he might have been misinformed concerning me; that therefore, if any man should have breathed on me with him, as an ill-affected man to the State, I would offer myself most humbly to his examination, to the end that so I might appear as innocent before his Lordship as I knew myself to be indeed; that, for the rest, it was most true that I was directly a Roman Catholic, and ever meant to be so; and that so, I most humbly begged the effects of his Lordship's compassion and favour, and that he would not procure me punishment for that which even he could hold to be no more than merely a matter of error in the understanding; whereas that will ought not to be offensive to anybody, which applied itself to no other end but the saving of a man's own soul, in his own way. His answer was very noble and kind: that he took the civility well at my hands, since I gave him so early an account of myself, though yet he were not then to learn that I was either come, or coming at least, into England; that he had often inquired of me with some curiosity, and that he must still do me so much right as to say, that, in the way of State, he knew nothing concerning me but well; that he was sorry to have heard before, and more to know at that time, that I was perverted in my religion;

and he wished that I would recover myself; but howsoever that I should do well to secure myself from others the best I could, but that from him I might safely expect, and assuredly should find, all effects of favour and good will.

When I had provided for myself in this sort, by removing that hurt which I feared most, I applied myself within few days, to look a little, gently, abroad. Now the very first thing I did was to change my lodging into Fleet Street, and immediately I presented my humble thanks to Sir Francis Bacon, and easily answered the arguments which he made against my change. From thence I went one evening to wait upon my Lord of Canterbury, Bancroft. I made my humble excuses for presuming so abruptly upon him, but I hoped that the honesty of my intention would beg pardon for that which, perhaps, might look like the indiscretion of an action; though yet I knew not how to avoid it without doing worse; that the very truth was that I had done a thing which I knew would be ill taken, but in which yet, I held myself so obliged, that it had no longer been in my power to put it off. For I had resolved to do the best I could to save my soul, and that, for my part, I conceived that it could not be possibly secured by me but by incorporating myself into

the Communion of the holy Catholic, Apostolic, Roman Church, which I had done; that yet I was extremely desirous to carry myself so, in this change, as that no manner of unnecessary offence might be taken at it; that, for my part, I was very far from procuring to make any noise; that it went to my very heart to consider the grief of my friends; and that there was no lawful thing under Heaven which I would not either do or suffer for the assuaging thereof; that I came then to him as to a person who had great power with them, as he should also have all authority with me; and so I most humbly desired that he would vouchsafe me his opinion and advice; and that, forasmuch as might concern the manner and order of my ways, I might be able so to address them as to give the least offence to his Majesty, and the least disgust to my friends, that possibly I could.

My Lord of Canterbury spake courteously to me, and said that I was welcome to him, though yet I came upon the worst errand of the world; that I was extremely to be blamed for having (my education and relation considered) apostatized from that faith wherein I had been born and bred; yea, and that I was even inexcusably to be condemned for having so precipitated myself therein; that whatsoever I might chance to have conceived,

yet I ought, even in all reason, to have suspended my resolution a while; or, if not my resolution, yet at least the execution of my purpose, in regard that I did even, at least, owe an equal and indifferent consideration of all that which could be said on both sides; but that now I had showed myself to be as much in fault as the Judge who should give sentence upon the only hearing of one part.

I answered him with humble thanks, not only for the liberty which he gave me to speak, but much more for the favour which he did me in the use of his. But to the substance of what he said, I thought I might very justly answer that I was not then to seek concerning the grounds of Protestant religion, but that I had been acquainted with them well; and that they are extant in many books, and that I had learnt them also from many mouths; and that particularly I had objected them, and even pressed them with a most earnest mind, against the arguments which made for Catholic religion, and which had wrought most upon my heart before my conversion; that if they moved me not then, there would also be no cause why they should move me now; for the things are still the same, and I must not hang my soul upon the cunning or craft of a disputer; that I could take God to witness, with much truth, that I parted

from that religion most unwillingly, as having all kinds of interests against any change; but that really, when I came to see where truth was, and is, and is still to be, I thought it too mean a thing for a Christian to defer, even for one hour, the paying homage and obedience to such a God, as had so infinitely obliged me by his goodness; besides the hazard of my eternal perdition, which I might justly fear, by delay.

The Bishop told me upon this, that I talked I could not tell what; and that I showed myself to be a young man; and that still he must protest that I was extremely to blame for condemning mine own religion unheard. "But at least," saith he, "you shall hear me now. For though it be fitter for others to take this pains than me, who have so many occasions of the King's service, which call hourly upon me, yet I bear you so much good will that I will satisfy you myself; and therefore you shall promise to come to me twice a week, to confer with me."

To this my answer was; that I would take it for a greater favour if he would be pleased to save his labour in that kind; that, for my part, I needed not confer, in any way of doubt concerning my religion; but yet to let him see that I was most willing to go as far as I could possibly to content

and serve him, I would not fail to wait punctually upon him (if he would needs have it so) to hear anything which he would be pleased to say; and to say anything which I might hope that he would not be displeased to hear. He thanked me and embraced me close; and looked as kindly upon me as that face could tell how to do. And he told me also, by way of farewell, that he would speak well of me to the King, and that he would do me good offices with my friends, and that I must come to him, at such and such times, both for the days and hours, and that he would show me after a kind of visible manner, how and when my religion had been contrived and framed, in all those points and particulars wherein it differed from theirs; and that then he would blow it down with as much ease as a man might do a house of cards. I humbly thanked him for the points of favour which he promised, and I gave him my word (and he would needs have me accompany it by giving him also my hand) that I would attend him whensoever he should appoint; and as for that last great point of gallantry of the house of cards, I told him that if he would indeed blow my religion down, as he said, it would betoken a stronger breath than ever any enemy of the Catholic Roman Church was yet found to have; and that, if yet he should be able

to do it, I humbly prayed him to consider that when he should have blown mine down he would yet have done but half his business, for that then I must intreat him to try if he could build up his own. "I warrant thee," said my Lord, "I will do it, and thou shalt see it" (for by this time he was grown pretty kind). And then he sought to make me believe that I should be welcome to him at all times, upon other occasions as well as these. And so I, taking my assignation for the next attendance, which I was to give, departed from him at that time.

When I waited upon him next, he fell to speak with me of the Supremacy, after he had first expressed kindness towards me. And though this point of controversy were not a very safe one for me to be free in, yet the questions which he asked me were not very extraordinarily captious; and I, in my answer, was very considerately cautious, though yet withal, we being alone, I thought it not to be so very necessary for me to dissemble all the truth of what I thought. And yet I remember well that when once he conceived that I spoke too highly of the authority of the Church of Rome, he told me that, before God, he thought himself to be as good a man as the Pope; yea, and that he could prove his succession from the

Apostles, as well as he, except only for the matter of some two or three hundred years. And this, of the two or three hundred years, I must confess, he spake a little more softly, than the rest; as, indeed, he had some cause. But thereupon I told his Lordship that two or three hundred years, in such a case as this, was not nothing; and that I thought he did himself wrong in not holding himself to be as sure of the first two or three hundred years as of the last thirteen or fourteen hundred. In fine, we spake long upon this particular, and it is not my business here to set down all the passages. But howsoever this point of the Supremacy might seem to touch harshly upon his freehold, yet he endured the liberty of my discourse with so great patience that made me wonder much the more to find him so extravagantly transported upon another occasion which was much less likely to have provoked him.

For in the next repair which I made to him, he spake of the invocation of Saints, and misliked it, and derided it, and took his pleasure upon it. I told him that the Church of God approved it, and practised it, and that it had done so in all ages; and that howsoever he acknowledged not the authority of the present Catholic Church whereof I was a member, yet I thought that such a person as

he would be sure not to set light by the judgment of so ancient, learned, holy and renowned Fathers as had expressed themselves in this particular; of whom I cited some passages, which he denied, and I desired leave to show them. Upon this he carried me into his library, of which, by the way, I am apt to think that it is one of the most excellent which is possessed by any one single subject in the whole world. And, indeed, it may well be so, for the last age it was introduced that the see and successors should still be the true proprietaries and owners of the library, and not the incumbent beyond his proper time. And besides, there are many books of controversy in religion, which come to loss by search; for they are taken from the true owners, and the innocent books are wont to perish, for the guilty's sake. And all do so devolve to the Metropolitan that it is no marvel though he abound in books.

But in the meantime as I was waiting upon my Lord of Canterbury into his library, in speech about the invocation of Saints, his heart grew to be mightily inflamed; and as we were turning the books, his tongue also to be enraged; and so he broke away, when we were in the very midst of our business. But the end of that conference was that, forsooth I must be looked to, and that I was

a dangerous man, &c. Upon this, he called for a secretary, and commanded him to make a warrant for my commitment; and said that he could do no less than lay me up. But yet, even whilst the warrant was drawing, he seemed a little to relent, and told me that he would not be severe; but hoped that I would also for my part dispose myself to some reason; though yet, indeed, he had found me more obstinate than he could possibly have conceived. I thanked him still for his favour; I was willing to ask pardon for any error; but I besought him not to expect that I should forsake my belief of anything concerning my religion, how unable soever myself might prove to defend it; for that I grounded not my belief of particular doctrines upon mine own reason, and otherwise than as that reason should guide me to such a Church and Judge of all controversies concerning religion.

In a third conference (and it was by five of the clock in the morning, upon the day of St. Peter and St. Paul) we fell upon divers controversies in religion, after a more confused manner (though indeed all were ever confused) and it was but talk that came from him, sometimes chiding, sometimes laughing, and now and then, a good tale. For by that time in my conscience, I think he grew to have no hope at all of me, but was content with

acquitting himself as such a pastor was like to do, who procured the good of souls after his fashion. But no part of that day's work was so memorable with me as that which now I shall relate.

It was at that hour of the day (the same being, as I said, no less than the Festivity of the blessed Apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul) when we heard one knock at the door, for the door was still shut upon us; and my Lord asked then "Who was there?" The man answered: "It is I, if it please your Grace," and he spoke it with a very whining voice; but if that, which he had in his hand, had been in his belly, it would have increased his courage. For when his Grace bade him come in, he brought a bowl of above a quart, one of those which Kings give to Archbishops for their New Year's gift. Now, thought I, shall I be drunk too; but the Bishop meant no such matter, but taking the bowl into one hand, he lifted up the cover with the other; and, without taking it clean off, he applied his mouth to the cup, between it and the cover, for fear belike lest I should be scandalized at the liquor, considering what day it was, and how early. But he drunk up that whole huge bowl full of that which his lip bewrayed and betrayed him in. And it was not beer, nor wine, nor ale, but a caudle, which showed me nutmeg and eggs.

It may here fall in fitly to be understood that though ordinarily I attended my Lord in the mornings, yet it happened also sometimes to be at other hours. But whensoever his Lordship was either interrupted with any precise, real business, or else pressed by the visit of very great persons, he would send for Sir Christopher Perkins,* who was lodged in the great gate-house of his house, and wish him to accompany and entertain me, and be kind to me; and still he sought to increase and cherish that acquaintance which he had formerly created between Sir Christopher and me. Now this Sir Christopher Perkins loved music very much, and had a boy whom he was yet suspected to love more; but at least he had a desire to make him profit well in that art. And calling him one day to sing and play before me, he asked me first whether myself had not attended a little to music whilst I was in Italy; and then whether, if I did, I had not also brought some songs from thence; for, if I had, he would desire me to let his boy copy them out of my books. I answered him affirmatively to all his demands and desires, and the honest man was so honest as to pay me with false money for my pains, For he gave out that, whatsoever I might pretend

* Sir C. Perkins (Dean of Carlisle 1595), 1547(?)-1622; in 1566 became a member of the Society of Jesus; afterwards employed on diplomatic missions; M.P. for Ripon; knighted 1604-5.—Ed.

from the teeth outward for religion, yet that certainly all was not right with me, within doors; and he gave it for shrewd evidence against me that I had brought a world of beastly and most abominable songs out of Italy, whilst yet really they were neither, so, nor so; but had many spiritual and most excellent madrigals amongst them; though yet indeed withal it is true that the far greater number were vain and foolish love songs, such as men absurdly make in all countries, but not one of them was odious or obscene. This gallant man would oftentimes be talking to me, and still after a very different manner in order to that one wicked end of persuading me to forsake my religion. Sometimes he would be trifling and toying with me, and telling me that, upon his life, I had fallen in love with some nun at Florence, and that in contemplation of her I had made some promise or vow not to profess any religion but hers. "But if that," saith he, "be the business, let your mind come back again with your body, for you shall not want nuns here, who may deserve you best respects beyond those others." To this I told him that I would hope he was but in jest; for otherwise it would be too unworthy a thing even for any inferior dull creature to tempt so much as any prentice with such trash as that, and much

more for a man of his authority and age to forget himself in such a kind to me.

But sometimes he would be telling me what a solemn kind of foolery it was to suffer for any side, either for his religion or mine, since in effect they were both the same, though Princes and Prelates of the Church might think for to vary it in circumstances, and in ceremonies according to the conveniences of time and place; and that, for his part, if I should be obstinate, he would hold me a great deal fitter for Bedlam than Bridewell, who could not, as he said, but know enough to keep me from such a madness as that; especially since it must also be evident to every man of common sense that, if I continued as I was, I must embark myself into an everlasting tempest, which would carry me to some shipwreck in the end, by engaging me either to be swallowed up in quicksands, or torn to pieces by rocks; whereas, if I would, I might be sure to have as prosperous a navigation with wind and tide, through this world into the harbour of plenty and pleasure, as any man of his acquaintance could desire.

But to that I had my answer at hand; for to the point of the indifferency of our two religions, he must pardon me if I believed him not so well as I did the holy Fathers of the primitive Church, and

in particular St. Cyprian, St. Epiphanius, St. Basil, and St. Augustine; who not only agree all in this, that no heretic can be saved, without repentance in regard that he obstinately holds at least some one little doctrine in contradiction to that of the Catholic Church; but if also he be only so far a schismatic as obstinately to disobey it in the least point of discipline; and that no virtue either of Christian fortitude or of Christian charity or any other is able to save any creature who dies without a repentance of that crime. Nay, both St. Epiphanius and St. Augustine go so far as to declare divers of those doctrines, as namely those of Aerius amongst others, to be expressly heretical and damnable, for denying prayer and sacrifice for the dead; which are held by the Protestants at this day. And as for his discourse of the prosperity or adversity of this world, I held it for a base and atheistical argument whensoever there should be question of souls.

Sometimes he would also be talking to me in the way of particular controversies concerning religion. And I remember that once he asked me upon what I grounded that great authority of the Pope. And I told him upon some places of Scripture, amongst other things, as *Pasce agnos meos*, and *Pasce oves meas*, "feed my lambs,"

"feed my sheep," which imply that the Christians who will belong to Christ our Lord, as sheep are wont to do to their shepherd, must be fed by St. Peter and his successors, and not only fed but physicked and governed, and corrected, and supported, as there should be cause; and that the same must be done, whether they were lambs, that is lay people of the most ignorant sort; or else grown sheep, that is pastors and prelates, of the highest kind. I put him also in mind of that other place:—*Tibi dabo claves regni coelorum*, etc.; "I will give thee" (saith Christ our Lord to St. Peter) "the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatsoever thou bindest upon earth shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth shall be loosed in heaven; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against that Church, etc."

But this gallant knight was not ashamed to say against the first place, that they were not sheep, but calves, who would be governed as the Pope desires to govern. And as for the other place of *Tibi dabo claves*, etc., he said that I understood Latin, and therefore that he would ask me of what tense *dabo* was; and I told him, of the future. "It is true," saith he; "and Christ said *I will give the keys of heaven*, but he never said *I do give them;* and unless you can show that, you

show nothing." But I told him, by way of answer, that Christ our Lord was Truth itself, and God, and the Son of God; and that by being but even his mother's son, he would not fail but be a man of his word. And therefore that since he said that he *would* give him the keys of the kingdom of heaven, I meant not to make it a question whether he *did* it, or no. But so base, in the meantime, and so profane was this man grown to be in his old age, who in his youth had been of so excellent education and profession; for beginning with virtue and learning, and being endowed with many good natural parts, he grew first, by vanity and immortification, to lose that excellent state of life wherein he was; he fell, in tract of time, to be vicious more ways than one; and withal to be both light, and busy, and ridiculous.

But at length, when afterward I came again to wait upon my Lord of Canterbury, he took up his countenance after a very extraordinary manner upon a sudden; and (when first he had saluted me drily) he directed Sir Christopher Perkins to be called to him. Upon his coming, he willed me to draw nearer, and asked me very abruptly if I would take the oath of allegiance.* But now, it

* This oath of allegiance was one devised by Bancroft and Sir C. Perkins with a view to dividing the Catholics and exposing them to persecution.—ED.

seemed, that he would not ask me that question but after a kind of legal manner, which was the cause why he associated himself for that purpose, and at that time, with another Justice of Peace; for the law indeed prescribes that there should be two, for the offering of that oath in form. But I told him the question was very new and unexpected by me; that my allegiance was well known to the world; that I hoped not to be interrogated after that manner, and that my Lord should do me a great favour, though yet a just one, if he would forbear to make doubt of me in that kind. He told me that I must be offered it; and that I were best take heed how I refused to take it. And indeed I understood afterwards that he was commanded to press me in it by the King. For his Majesty one day asking the Bishop what became of me, upon the speech we had together, he answered that he held me then for a kind of obstinate man; and that he thought me not very likely to accommodate myself to reason. Whereupon the King was pleased to direct him to put me to the oath, with opinion that by no means I would refuse it; and with resolution that if I took it, I should quietly be let alone, and so the scandal of my charge would be soon forgotten.

From hence it therefore grew that I was put in

this manner to the oath; but the circumstance of that time was the effect of another cause, or rather occasion. For that very week Mr. Blackwell, who was the Archpriest, was taken; and the man, who till then had been held to be both very virtuous and very learned, was so handled in the beginning of his captivity by those subtle men of State, that by threatening the old weak-hearted man extremely at some times, and by promising him extremely fair at other, they put him, in effect, out of his wits. And first, they brought him down to a consent, in taking the oath; afterwards to a good liking of it, and writing for it, and, finally, to a not tolerating in any other man that he should refuse it, whereof myself had either too good or too bad experience afterward.

But in the meantime when my Lord Archbishop saw that I made so great a difficulty to take it, he advised me very seriously to think much better of the matter, and to wait upon him again within few days. I did so, and then declared that I was but an ignorant man; that the oath contained points of doctrine, which even the most learned could scarce resolve, &c. He told me that this excuse must not serve; for the oath concerned but the true allegiance of every loyal subject to his lawful King; and that, besides of all those reasons

which bound me to it, I was also obliged by authority since my Archpriest,* a worthy and a learned virtuous man, had both taken it, and was ready to assure all men that they were bound to do so too.

To this I answered that the example of Mr. Blackwell had taught me little more than that I must not put confidence in myself; that temporal fear had made him do that now, which judgment and obedience to his Supreme Pastor had made him refuse to do before; that subordinate superiors were then to be reverenced and obeyed by me, when they continued to yield obedience to such others as were both their superiors and mine; but that when they went out of that way, and wandered from that line of unity, they must not be followed but forsaken.

The Archbishop upon this grew into a very great rage, and told me that they would hamper me well enough (for those were his words), and that it was not for such a princox as I to teach them what they were to do. I told him I was very far from taking upon myself to teach anybody but myself; that he had no cause to be angry for my saying what I thought I

* George Blackwell, 1545(?)-1613, was appointed by Clement VIII. Archpriest over the Secular Clergy of England in 1597-8.—Ed.

might say, nor yet for not doing that which I was so very sure that I might not do; that, for my part, the more I considered the oath, so much the less I was able to take it if it were but because I found it so full of universal propositions, which were dangerous to be denied by oath, where any one contrary particular would make a man forsworn. As for example; that no *Pope* can have authority, either *of himself* or from any other, whereby he may absolve the subjects of *any* Prince, for *any* cause, or upon *any occasion* whatsoever, from the oath of allegiance, which he may formerly have made. For this includes all cases, and all persons, and all crimes, whatsoever, notwithstanding that all possible fair means might formerly have been used by all creatures, and notwithstanding that the crimes were never so public and so scandalous, and so incorrigible, and consequently so very dangerous for the exterminating the faith of Christ, or destroying the moral good of mankind, as might possibly be, yea, and notwithstanding that the forbearing to yield obedience to such a Prince would evidently be the means of setting all things straight again. Such universals I said as these did even fright me from taking any such oath as this.

I also desired my good Lord that he would give

me leave to put him a case, and he bade me say on. And it was this: I told him that there was a world of Moors in Spain, and that King Philip the third, as I was told, had a desire to expel them from thence for their damnable, and inveterate, and universal hypocrisy in matters of religion, and for their daily and desperate practices against that Crown, in point of State, since daily they were combining both with the Hollanders, and with the Moors of Afric for the destruction thereof. This, I say, was then conceived to be the design of that King, who was a most Catholic, and most holy Prince. But if perhaps he were as wicked as he is good, and in his heart should be as much a Mahometan as he is a Christian, and should carry himself, a clean contrary course, and at the first should privately take part with those Moors, and should secretly convey his treasures and arms into their hands, and then should put his forts and his ports into their power, and afterwards run apace towards the destruction of all Christianity; and if all possible fair means be used for the preventing of so great a mischief, and all should be found to be in vain save only the way of resistance and force; and if, by good use thereof, some Christian Governor or two of some Provinces might perhaps be able to preserve Christianity; I asked my Lord

Archbishop whether such a Governor or Viceroy as that might or should do well to take such an oath of allegiance as this is? But all the answer I could get of his Grace was to let me see by his hard favour, that he was much offended, and to make me hear what he was pleased to say, namely that I had put a foolish and metaphorical case, and that I was a dangerous man.

I told him that I was not dangerous to others; for I meant no hurt at all to any man alive; and that because I would also procure to be no dangerous man to myself, I could not resolve to take the oath; though yet I still besought him to be pleased to be my good Lord, and not to misinterpret, and much less to misreport, my good meaning. And as for the metaphysicalness of my case, I desired leave to tell him that I had read and seen so much of mankind that nothing which any man could possibly do was metaphysical now with me; especially when I considered how sure we are of the truth of what King Solomon was, and what he did, he who was the most wise and most learned man of the whole world, a person to whom God vouchsafed to appear, and with whom he spake divers times, a mighty king, a most illuminated prophet, a pen of Holy Ghost, and a type of Christ our Lord himself. And yet this man, this more

than man, grew to be such a kind of not only monster but devil, that at the instance of his Pagan concubines he fell flat from the service and worship of Almighty God, who had sought to bend that heart by innumerable and most admirable benefits and graces towards his Divine Master, and yet he applied himself diligently to adore and offer incense with his own pernicious hands to as many idols as they would set before him.

I also represented to his Lordship the example of Judas in the New Testament, who, having been chosen by the very wisdom of God himself, out of the mass and bulk of the whole world, to be one of twelve Apostles, who had been a spectator of the sovereign beauty and majesty, and auditor of the incomparable wisdom, of Christ our Lord, who had with his own eyes seen him work such millions of miracles and perhaps had wrought some with his own hands; and yet this man, this devil, was grown to such a darkness of mind as to hate this Lord of life, and to betray him to death, and to do it by a kiss; and that, as a man may say, for six year, and finally to despair and hang himself. And now, after these two cases, I would fain know of your Lordship what can be accounted metaphysical, or what man, in his wits, will ever presume by way of oath to undertake that no other single man, nor ever

any other of his whole posterity, can possibly prove to be wicked in the very highest degree.

If my Lord of Canterbury were angry before, he was enraged now, and spake of nothing but prisons, and other punishments of the worse kind, and declared that he would presently commit me; and so commanded one of his men to draw the warrant. Yet even then he grew to say that he was sorry that he must proceed with me after that manner, but that my obstinate and dangerous spirit obliged him to it. "And yet," saith he, "I will do you one favour, which is to let you choose your prison, because I desire not to do hurt to your health. I humbly thanked his Lordship, though yet I said, I knew not how to choose any of those things, whereof I thought I deserved none. And so he sent me to the Fleet, and it was upon the very day of the translation of St. Thomas of Canterbury, in that very chair wherein I had offered my earnest prayers to him when I came into England, and I have carried a particular devotion to him, after my poor manner, ever since in memory of that favour which I received there.

I continued in that prison some six months, and I was committed close prisoner for some part of the time, with a very unheard of example, though yet, as I used the matter with the Warden of the

Fleet, it was not very strictly observed; nor had I any otherwise merited disfavour in any kind than either by the many visits which were given me (whereof I was in no fault, since most of them grew against my will), or else by the mere spleen of my Lord Archbishop against me. For he was not able to endure that I should be so much content as I was, and particularly that I should take pleasure in a certain Irish lawyer, who served me then, and whom he strangely made me dismiss for the time.

During my restraint in the Fleet, I was visited divers times by Sir Christopher Perkins, who still was touching upon the old strings, but they made no good music in my ear. I was often visited also by Doctor Morton,* who was made a Bishop afterwards, and I was much vexed by him in person, and much abused by his ill reports of me, till such time as I took the boldness to speak to him about the points of falsification, wherewith Fa. Persons had charged him home, and whereof he had convinced him about that very time as I took the boldness to speak to him, which I was bold to make the Doctor see, and feel; and so he grew to trouble me every day less than other. I was also then tormented much with Mr. Crawshaw. For

* Thomas Morton, 1564-1569, Bishop of (1) Chester, (2) Litchfield, (3) Durham, a man of great learning, with a high repute for his skill in disputations with Catholics.—Ed.

there is not a more intolerable kind of man than an ignorant, audacious, loud, and false undertaker, such as he ever was.

I had very many friends, who, out of courtesy, and much acquaintance, and some others also, who, out of curiosity, came to visit me very often; and particularly Sir Maurice Barkley,* Sir Edwin Sands, Sir Henry Goodyear, Mr. Richard Martin, and Mr. John Dunne, besides a thousand others. I lived with them all in great love; and ordinarily there was no set discourse of religion. But Sir Maurice Barkley, who was my dear friend, coming once to take his leave of me, as he was going into the country for a long time, told me in very clear manner that he had so great an opinion both of my understanding and good disposition that it would be impossible for me not to return to be again of the same religion with him, if ever God would be so merciful as to send me some great mischance before I died. I told him I had not heard that crosses had ever made Catholics turn Protestants at their death, but that many Protestants had

* Sir M. Berkeley (see Index to Gardiner's History). Sir E. Sandes, the eminent statesman, an important figure in the early history of Virginia. Sir H. Goodyear, Donne's friend and patron. Mr. R. Martin, to whom Ben Jonson dedicates "The Poetaster." John Donne, Junr., son of the Dean of St. Paul's, who in 1660 edited Sir Tobie Matthew's "Collection of Letters."—Ed.

grown to be Catholics upon such occasions, and at such times; and therefore that if he would turn the tables, I thought he might be sure to win. That was all I said; but whatsoever he thought of me, I am sure I thought him hugely out of the way, though otherwise he were a gallant, noble, witty gentleman; and withal a most honest man, if Puritanism would have let him alone.

Sir Henry Goodyear was ever pleasant and kind, and gave me much of his sweet conversation; and he would ingenuously confess whensoever in discourse he thought I had the better reason of the two. But if his constancy had been as great as his nature was good, he had been much happier in both worlds. Both Dunne and Martin were very full of kindness to me at that time, though it continued not to be hearty afterward. By their discourses with me, when I was in prison, I found that they were mere libertines in themselves; and that the thing for which they could not long endure me was because they thought me too saucy, for presuming to show them the right way, in which they liked not then to go, and wherein they would disdain to follow any other.

Sir Edwin Sands came often to me, and dwelt much with me, but yet prevailed not much upon me. For though he were a man of a very great wit,

and of good learning, and flowing speech, yet the tediousness of his discourse, the solemness of his understanding, the visible delight which he had to be extremely admired, and his resolution to reduce all religion to human reason, made me apt to fear him a little, and to like him less.

One day, I remember, when he came to me, his discourse of religion was such as led me to speak of the nature of faith. Wherein, upon some question that fell between us, I resorted to a book, which I had then in my lodging; and it was written by an Irish Jesuit, whose name I understood afterwards to be Holywood, but he called himself in Latin *de Sacrobosco*. The title of it, as I remember, is *Defensio Concilii Tridentini*, concerning the vulgar translation and edition of the Bible. This book had been much commended to me by Mr. Roger Witherington, who was my fellow-prisoner, and next neighbour; and indeed I was much bound to him for comfort in many kinds, and particularly for much lights in many things which concerned Catholic religion. But there is a sixth chapter in that book, as I remember, which treats *de regula Fidei* exactly well, and shows the difference between probabilities and certainties, and between human and divine faith; the knowledge of which truths came luckily to me in those times, for Sir

Edwin Sands went upon weaker grounds, and did as good as declare that he had no other kind of certainty that Christ our Lord died in Jerusalem than he had that Julius Cæsar lived and governed in Rome; wherein that tract, which I had got him to read, did so unbeguile him, that it made him take the less pride in troubling himself with me afterwards.

About that time came often to me Doctor Albericus Gentili,* the Doctor of the chair in Oxford for Civil Law. He had been of ancient and great acquaintance with my father, for whose sake he loved me also very much. He gave me several visits, when I was in prison; and, by what I understood afterward, he was employed to use some diligences by my father. He dealt with me divers times to forsake those foolish opinions, as he called them, which made me hold it for unlawful for me, who was a Roman Catholic, to communicate with the Protestants of England in the service and sacrament of their Church. But I quickly made him see upon what reasons I must rather die than do so. From that endeavour he came to another, as namely that, forsooth, I must needs take the

* He was Professor of Law at Oxford, and a freethinker. He wrote *Lectiones Virgilianæ* and *De Jure Belli*. He died 1611, aged sixty-one, without reconciliation to the Church, which he had abandoned.—ED.

oath of allegiance. I told him that I was ready to die for my allegiance to the King; but that yet I was not able to take the oath of pretended allegiance, which contained very different things from allegiance, and had been censured by the supreme Pastor of God's Church, from whom it was unlawful for me to swerve in such cases. He said I should do discreetly to take it in such sort as he had taken his oath of believing the Council of Trent before he came out of Italy in his youth. I asked him how that was; and he made me this answer in direct words (for we spoke Italian): "*Giusto come pigliarei un scudello di brodetto.*" —Just as I would take a mease of broth! Upon that I began to tell him that, for my part, I durst not be so easy in swearing to things concerning religion, which were against my conscience; that I had been all that week extremely subject to the torment of the toothache; that I found I was not good at enduring bitter pain; that I should never be able to find courage in myself to hold my finger in the flame of a candle for one hour; and much less endure hell-fire both as to body and soul for all eternity; and that therefore, if I should be damned, I were utterly undone. The man grew to look upon me with a countenance between smiling and scorning; and asked me whether I was one of

them who believed that there was any fire in hell. I told him that I believed it, and knew it, as a thing which God had taught to be a most certain truth, and both revealed it in Holy Scripture, and delivered it by the holy Catholic Church of all ages. To which he made no answer but this: That it was very well done of me, if I had a mind to it; but that, for his part, &c.: and there he ended, without concluding the sentence, which gave me no great loss towards the believing of anything that he could say.

Captain Whitlock* came also often to me, and would be talking to me like a madman, as he was, both profanely against piety, and licentiously against modesty; though he did it after so jolly and witty a manner that he would tempt a man almost to forgive him even in spite of his heart. I answered as I thought fit, and asked him once withal what security he could have that the earth would not shrink under him, that so he might be swallowed up into hell, as he went drolling, and fooling, and blaspheming, up and down the world, both against the Catholic faith, from which he was not wholly a stranger, as having been long bred

* Captain Edmund Whitelocke, adventurer on the continent, and courtier. He got his captaincy, when fighting in France, from the Governor of Provence. Suspected in connection with the Gunpowder Plot.—ED.

in France, as also against the modesty of virtuous minds. He asked me then, where I found that men were to be damned for certain sins of the understanding part, which made one man differ from another in belief; and certain other sins which pleased some, without doing others any wrong; and that, for his part, he maliced nobody, but loved them lustily that loved him. Upon that I cited St. Paul to him, who condemns sects and heresies, as also the works of the flesh, and saith that such as commit them shall never inherit the kingdom of God. But Whitlock replied that *to me St. Paul was a widgeon, and I pray thee leave playing the fool.*

There came to me also one Mr. Cooper, who was a practiser and counsellor at law; and he held also a kind of office under my father. This man would still be telling me how the law of England stood at this day, and what mighty dangers a man incurred by taking those unlawful courses wherein I was. To which the answer might be easily made by one who considered eternity more than time, and who knew and was able to tell him that the laws which oppose my religion came very lately in; and how they destroyed, and rooted up, the belief and practice of all ancient times. After that, he would needs play the divine, and would prove to me,

forsooth, out of St. Paul, that he condemned the belief of the Papists by censuring such as, he said, would forbid marriages, and eating of meats in the later ages of the world. But I showed him clearly out of St. Augustine that those sentences of St. Paul were directly fulfilled upon the Manichees, who condemned marriages, and eating of flesh, as unlawful and naught; but not the Catholics, who condemned them not as naught, but commended to all Christians, who are in health, abstinence from some meats, and continency to all ecclesiastical persons, from all pleasure of women, as more excellent and good. "Doth St. Austen," said the lawyer, "write this?" "Yes," said I; "and I can show it you, when you will." "St. Austen," said he, "was a villain." By that time this lawyer was near my stairs, and, I confess, I was half tempted to throw him down, and break his neck.

But that which gave me a more perplexed care was the commandment which I received from my Lord of Canterbury that, upon a certain day and at a set hour, I should go wait on Doctor Andrews, who then was Bishop of Chichester. Now, though the order came from my Lord of Canterbury, it was negociated and procured by some nearer friends of mine, who had also sent a certain chaplain of theirs to be in place where he

might hear, without being seen; that so he might afterwards make relation of the issue of that day's work.

Upon my arrival with my Lord of Chichester, he welcomed me after a grave and good manner, and told me how glad he was to see me, and that he would be more glad of a more particular acquaintance; and that, if it pleased me, we might often meet. And so, after some few usual civilities, he desired to know of me what I commanded. I told him that it was not my part to command but to obey, when he was in place, and therefore that I would be glad to know his pleasure. He sought, perhaps, to put the offer of conferring upon me. But I, on the other side, was resolved that I would be upon the defensive, whensoever there should be question of any conference.

But when he saw that there was no remedy, he began with me after this manner: "I understand, Sir, that you have embraced the Popish religion, and forsaken that of English Protestants, wherein you were born and bred. For my part, I am an old man, and I have been a lover of books, ever since I was born; and I understand so much of God's goodness that I desire so to believe in him, and so to serve him here, as that I may enjoy him hereafter. And certainly if in all this time I had

been able to find just cause why I should hold myself to be unsafe where I am, I should not have failed to choose the best way to the next world, whatsoever it might have cost me in this. But it seems, Sir, that you have met with this better way, and you know upon what ground you are gone to it; and you are bound even by common charity to tell me in this case what your motives were."

I told him that I was far from being so vain as to compare myself any way with him; or so ignorant as not to know how eminent a man he was, even amongst very eminent men; that it was true that I had changed my religion, and that I had not done it lightly, but upon great motives, and yet that perhaps they were no greater than such as might have often occurred to him; but that it was, in this case, concerning divinity as it is in philosophy, from whence we learn that *Quicquid recipitur, permodum recipientis recipitur*—it depends not always upon a man's wit or learning that he either admits or resists such considerations or reasons, as may import to the good or ill of his soul, in order either to salvation or damnation; but rather that the disposition of the party may be either better or worse; or the interest or passion either more provoking or less; or the degree of God Almighty's grace either more intense or

remiss, which may make very much to the matter, whether such a motive may work more or less with such a man, at such a time. And as we see it is in visible objects, that if the eye look through a green glass the object will seem green to the eye; and red, if the glass be red, and so in the rest; so also doth it occur with the eye of the mind; for if that eye look through a passion, the object will have a tincture thereof, and it will hardly see anything as indeed it is. But that, for my part, I conceive myself to have seen those things so very clearly which concerned me in the way of religion, that my conscience would inexcusably have condemned me if I should have refused to admit them. As for him, perhaps he thought that he had no reason to conceive himself to be bound to change upon these motives; and whether he did well therein or no, it was not my business to consider, and much less to judge, I being far from so dangerous an ambition as to take God's office out of his hands.

But yet still he thought fit to insist that he might know what had wrought most upon me. And then I told him, without further ceremony, that they were the qualities and plain marks of the Church of Christ our Lord, which were most evidently foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament, and were palpably declared also by Christ our Lord,

and his holy Apostles, of the New, in a multitude of clear passages and texts; which I showed to have been interpreted by the Fathers of the holy, primitive Church in that sense to which we apply them now. I cited many of them to his Lordship which spake of a continual visibility, of a perpetuity, of an infallibility, of sanctity, of unity, of universality, of converting nations from idolatry, of having kings for nursing-fathers, and queens for nursing-mothers, of the fortitude of her martyrs, of the learning of her doctors, of the piety of her confessors, of the purity of her virgins, of the penance of her eremites and innumerable other saints, both in the secular and religious state of life. And I besought him to let me say, because I thought it, and conceived also that I could prove it, if need were, that all these signs and marks did most absolutely belong to the Catholic Church, communicating everywhere with the Bishop of Rome, and in no kind of imagination with the Protestant Church, either of England, or any other place of the world.

He told me that my discourse was rather impertinent than untrue. For it was true that the Church of Christ was such as I had showed, but that it was not pertinent for him to be told so then by me, who neither would deny it, nor could doubt

thereof; and that the belonging of these marks to the Church, and their having been fulfilled both therein and thereby, made as much for him as me, since my Church and his were the same. And when I chanced afterward to pitch further upon the necessary visibility of the Church, as a reason why I had departed from his, because his could not possibly be proved to have been always visible, he expressed himself to me after a large manner, and with much appearance of gravity and good will, telling me how very heartily he was sorry that a man, forsooth, of my condition and good parts should forsake the communion of their Church upon a mere misconceipt of what they held, as if they, forsooth, believed that the Church was not always to be visible, which he pretended to be utterly mistaken. I made a double answer to this: that first if he held, as few other Protestants do, that the Church must be always visible, I should put his Lordship to as much trouble, to show where the Protestant Church had been visible through all the ages since Christ our Lord, and in all those parts of the world where the Church of Christ our Lord was to be spread. And secondly that his Lordship stood single, or else at least very solitary, in respect of his whole party, by what he said; for that all the Protestant parts of Germany, and Poland, and Denmark, whether

they be Lutheran or Calvinist, and of Scotland, Holland, and France also, yea and a far greater part of England, protest clearly against the necessity of having always had a visible Church. And though perhaps his Lordship might produce some few passages either of Luther or Calvin themselves, and of some also of their followers, which incline some time to show that the Church must be visible, yet that would make little against me, who declare, and am ready to show, that they frequently and usually denied the perpetual visibility of the Church; and that the most constant grounds of their religion lie that way as is apparent to the whole world. And, indeed, they cannot so handsomely pretend to justify their rebellion both against God and man by departing out of the true visible Church, but only upon the strength of that poor and weak broken reed. And whensoever they chance to say any little word to the contrary, though it be both very rarely and very darkly, yet even that is upon mere necessity, and when they are in argument with certain Anabaptists, and Familists, and the like, whom they take to be more fanatical than themselves; for then they triumph as with victory upon them, in the strength of those very arguments and reasons which we bring against these men, when we are in any dispute with them.

But as for me, my good Lord, it is not my business to show that your great Lutherans and Calvinists are not contrary, and very contrary, to themselves, in the several parts of their writings; but only to affirm this most certain truth, that they all believe and declare that there is no necessity at all for the Church of Christ our Lord to be always visible, because indeed they were either so ingenuous and not so foully impudent (which Fox and others were) as even so much as to pretend, though without all colour of truth, that their Church could be proved to have been always visible, and therefore they resolved rather to rely upon certain extraordinary vocations and illuminations, than to cast themselves into worse straits.

My Lord of Chichester replied to me here that my time was lost in showing what the judgment of Luther and Calvin was, for that the Church of England esteemed them no more than she found cause; that in England no one learned man, except Dr. Fulke, had declared that there was no necessity of a continual visibility in the Church; that, for his part, he was far from submitting to any other Reformed Church than that of England; that he held the English Protestant Catholic Church, and the Roman Catholic Church, to be one and the same Church of Christ, forasmuch as he

might conceive the fundamental points of faith, and the substantial worship and service of God; that we were both the same militant army, the same sheepfold, and the same house of God; and that the only question between us both was, in very deed, and might justly be, whether that part of the house wherein they dwelt, or else that other part which we inhabit, were the better swept, and more cleanly kept, and more substantially repaired.

My answer was to his Lordship much after this manner: that when his Lordship said to me *We teach or hold this or that*, I should be glad he would tell me particularly, and that he would also tell me constantly, whom he meant by *We* and *We;* for I thought that he would find little company to be of the same mind with him; and if he had much to-day he would not perhaps have much to-morrow, for the morn is not more variable than the minds of many of them both were and are; that in the meantime it is indeed as true, as it was confessed to be so by his Lordship, that they can show no manner of distinct Church from ours, which was always visible; that it seems to be fully as strange that a man of his great learning should say that the Roman Catholic Church and the English Protestant Church should compose and constitute one Church; that if this indeed could be

true, the whole current of the Doctors and Fathers of the holy primitive Church, and indeed of all the ages since Christ our Lord, were no less than out of their wits; when they made distinct catalogues of all the particular heresies, both of their own and of the then precedent times since Christ our Lord, and when they also taught that every single point of doctrine which was held in disobedience to the Church was damnable; that not only all heresy, which relates to points of doctrine, destroys salvation; but that all schism also, which only implies a disobedience in point of discipline, is yet so detestable a crime, that no virtue, no alms, no prayer, no penance, no nor even death, which is suffered for the name of Christ our Lord, can purge it, without repentance of that particular sin, from incurring the eternal torments of hell-fire. Yea, and St. Basil goes so far as to profess that even a single word, when it contradicts anything which belongs to faith, must not be missed for the maintaining of a thousand lives. And much more I said to that purpose.

My Lord of Chichester was then a little troubled, and, in my conscience, would not have been sorry to be free of the bargain, which he had then in hand; but he replied thus: that those things were not ill said, so that they were rightly understood,

but yet indeed that there might be error therein; and howsoever that they were general, and that we might do well to come to particulars; and accordingly to that proposition, or rather occasion, he wished me to propound somewhat, wherein there were difference between him and me, that so it might be considered whether the English Protestants, or Roman Catholics, were in the right.

My answer was: that I saw not how this could serve to good purpose; for whatsoever he should say by way of impugning the faith of the holy Catholic Church, would be little credited by me; that my soul must not rely upon the speech of any man, for being uttered by one who had more wit and learning than myself; for so I should believe one thing to-day, and another thing to-morrow; but because it was spoken by Almighty God, and propounded by his holy Catholic Church to be believed; and that otherwise it would not be able to breed faith, but only opinion, in me.

He said he would affirm nothing but that which should be as evident as that two and two made four. "As for example," saith he, "it is better to pray both with the understanding and with the will than with the will alone"—alluding by that speech to the question of praying, or not praying, in an unknown tongue. To this I answered that

I thought it was much better to pray with both those faculties of the mind than with one alone; provided always that there were a parity of circumstances in both cases; and therefore the Church advises her children to pray with both those faculties, and to do it also with much attention and devotion, and the more the better. But now, if his meaning were to strike at the custom, which sometimes is used in the Church, of praying in an unknown tongue, when Christians are not learned, and who may yet perhaps desire to accompany the Church sometimes in her holy prayers, and to recite the same in Latin with her, to declare in some sort, even thereby, amongst other reasons that they are not heretics by condemning that which the Church permits; in that case it would be better, at that time, to pray after that manner than after another. Besides that, it is most certain that the pious affection of any man, whatsoever that affection may chance to be, either love of God, grief of sin, desire of grace, and the like, is much less distracted, whilst the mind is not perplexed by any doubtful or glimmering conceit of what such hard words may mean (which is the case of men very often when they recite the Psalms, and other Scriptures) than when they have no understanding at all of the words, whereby their minds

at least may be distracted, and perhaps their wills disordered, and their humility tempted. And therefore, in such cases as these, it would not fall out to be two to one on the Protestant side against the Catholic, but ten to one on the Catholic side against the Protestant. As he, who prays sometimes in the prayers and language of the Church, may exercise perhaps more virtues, at that very time, than when he prays in his own language; more humility, more reverence, more conformity to the practice of the Church, together with a kind of tacit protestation that he is a Catholic in that point. And so, that which *caeteris paribus*, and of itself, is less excellent may, by circumstance, fall out to be more excellent, and whether it be so, more or less, it is clearly no error to permit it, and as clearly it is an heresy to impugn it.

We fell also, by an accident, to touch upon the point of invocation of Saints; where, against the opposition, I took the boldness to tell him, that besides the authority of the Church, which makes the denial of it to be heresy, the holy and learned Fathers of the more primitive times were clear both in the belief and practice of that doctrine. And I know not with what kind of sincerity, or at least of memory, he most confidently affirmed to me that it was not so; that indeed the Saints prayed for

us, but that we were not warranted, by our prayers, to beg those prayers at their hands. I told him, with no less confidence, that the Fathers prayed diligently to them, and I cited such few places as occurred at that time to my remembrance, yet would he not by any means admit thereof; but some of the places, forsooth, were spoken by exaggeration, and therefore must not be built upon in the way of doctrine; others were taken out of books, which were not very authentically belonging to the supposed authors, and, in a word, they must not be of force to evict that point; and that St. Paul, forsooth, showed very clearly in his first chapter to the Romans how unlawful a thing it was to pray to any but to God. And then he told me much of the nature of the word, whereby the Apostle expressed himself—*invocare*, *epicalein*, which is proper, saith he, to be done to God alone, in whom alone we believe; for the Apostle saith *How shall men invoke but him in whom they believe?* But I told him that rather than he should be much troubled at my invoking the Saints, I would not tell him that I would invoke them; but it should serve if I might pray to them to pray for me; for the Church directed me but to that. So that still I persisted, and said that I was sure, the Church approved and recommended that doctrine

to us, and therefore that I was safe, and I would be so. Then he told me that the Church, whereof I spake, was grown a little too imperious upon the souls of men in these later ages, and prescribed too fast upon their belief. I replied that I believed the Church to be everlastingly the same; and that, as it had ever been directed by the Holy Spirit of Almighty God, which had kept it from being prevailed upon by error and heresy, which are the gates and power of hell, so, I assured myself, that it would be so for ever, and that if any man should disobey it, he would deserve to be no better than a very *publican* and *pagan* might be, according to that brand, which was fastened upon him by no less than the very mouth of Christ our Lord himself.

By occasion of that text, I desired leave to unfold myself a little. And really I remember well, and God himself may vouchsafe to be a witness, that I discoursed thus: Let the case, if it please your Lordship, be thus put: suppose that I had lived, an unlearned Catholic, in Luther's time, and had been kneeling before an image of our B. Lady; and that Luther had passed by me, and had overheard me say that part of my Ave Maria—*Sancta Maria, mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus, nunc, et in hora mortis nostrae, Amen*—"Holy Marie, Mother

of God, pray for us sinners, now, and in the hour of our death, Amen"; and suppose that he had then desired to speak with me a little apart, and had told me that he was scandalized both to see and hear me; for he had seen me idolatrously worship images, and had heard me heretically pray in Latin, I being ignorant of that tongue, and withal that I had blasphemously robbed God of his honour, by praying to Marie, after a most unchristian manner, and very contrarily to the word of God; that, for my part, I made him know, that though he might perhaps have taken scandal, yet I was sure that I had given him none; that, on the other side, he had scandalized me extremely, by affirming those doctrines to be erroneous, which were ever both believed and practised by the holy Catholic Church; that I besought him not to presume to prefer his own opinion before the doctrine of the Spouse of Christ our Lord; that the pretence which he made of Scripture was indeed but his own fancy and conceit, and that the Church knew better than he what was agreeable, more or less, to the holy word, and will of Almighty God; that Luther was still obstinate and refused to be satisfied by me; that then I sought and found two or three able and devout Catholic men, who were common friends to us both, and that I made them

know in good manner what had passed between Luther and me; and that I entreated them to do good offices for the recovering and settling of his soul; that they tried, but lost their labour, because Luther was more insolent than ever; upon this, that I resorted to the Church, that is, to the pastors and prelates of the Church, who were assembled at that time in a Council; and that I declared the whole process of this business to them, and committed the matter to their care; that they required him to appear before them; that they took notice, and examined his opinions; and, upon a serious consideration thereof, that they rejected them as unlawful; condemned them, as heretical; and excommunicated all such persons as maintained them; that Luther was still where he had been before, and protested against the Church more and more; and blasphemed it with an open and most impious mouth. And now, I ask your Lordship, in what case both I, and Luther, am? As for me, I have done just that, which the holy Church appointed, and I have done it in the same manner, and by the very same degrees, which he prescribed: *Si peccaverit in te frater tuus, &c.*—"If thy brother offend against thee" (and by the way, what offence can ever be greater than to pervert me in point of religion?)

" admonish him thereof, hand to hand; and if that serve not the turn, do it before two or three witnesses, and if that also serve not, tell the Church, and, if he will not hear, that is if he will not obey, the Church, let him be to thee as a publican and as a pagan." Now, therefore, the mouth of Christ our Lord himself, that mouth of extreme pity and mercy, hath yet none for Luther, but directs me to hold him for no better than a very publican and pagan; which signifies both the greatest infamy, and the greatest impiety also, which can be conceived. And certainly, if that were so, then, it will not fail to be so now; and if then I should have been a good Christian for doing this duty after this manner, and if Luther had been an heretic, and must have been by me then as a very publican and a pagan, I must now learn some great reason from your Lordship why the case concerning us both must not be still the same.

Upon this, I protest upon my faith, my Lord of Chichester was very much altered in his very aspect, and much also in the manner of his words, yea and much more than in the words themselves. But in conclusion, when I pressed him much, and very much, he made me, in fine, this answer: that if Luther had been proceeded with thus, he would have been obliged not to profess

and publish the doctrines, to which he had formerly been inclined, against the judgment of the Catholic Church of that time. But whether, upon that warning, he should have been bound to renounce his interior belief, his Lordship affirmed to be a very different question; and that it would perhaps require a much more serious deliberation than the lateness of that evening would admit.

In the meantime I saw that he was troubled at it; and I replied again and again, but still could never get other answer. And I am sure that, for my part, I was glad to have done my cause no more hurt; and I believe the chaplain in the blind corner did not brag so much as he hoped he should, in the news which he was to carry to his lord. I knew nothing of his being there at that time; but I understood it afterwards. In the meantime his Lordship and I parted after a very friendly manner, and I heard afterwards that he used my name very well upon some such occasions as occurred. And I blessed Almighty God, with my whole heart, for advancing me to the communion of his holy Catholic Church, the strength of whose cause is so great as that an ignorant novice, like myself, needed not lose his wits for fear (whilst he had that doctrine, which it teaches, both in his heart and in his hand) to

show himself, when he was commanded in the presence of one of the most eminent adversaries of his time. But I heard not, either then or at any time afterwards, the least word about my being to attend him any more, though you have seen how, when I waited upon him first, he bespoke me for a more particular acquaintance, and for having *many meetings afterwards*.

And this was the last for discourse and conference in this kind, wherewith I was troubled during my restraint.

The plague was then hot in London, and yet it was in no power of mine to get released from that prison for any time, though I offered great security for returning to make myself prisoner upon all warnings. But my Lord of Canterbury Bancroft's zeal (if it were not rather somewhat else) was so great that it would by no means give way at that time. Yet Sir Francis Bacon, my noble and true friend, was so very earnest with many of the great ones, to get me leave to wait upon him with my keeper, as often as he should desire it, that at length, he made the Bishop more flexible, and obtained that kind of liberty for me. I was informed afterwards that he got it with the less difficulty by promising that he would deal earnestly with me about my return to Protestant

religion; but, for my part, I was not of the plot. It is true that now and then he would be speaking some little thing to me of that kind; but he was quickly and very easily to be answered; for he was in very truth (with being a kind of monster both of wit and knowledge also in other things) such a poor kind of creature in all those which were questionable about religion, that my wonder takes away all my words. I remember that once he talked to me of the invisible Church, and of Elias, who was the only prophet, and the only true worshipper of God of his time, and I know not what more of that kind. Now I could not upon that occasion but turn a little quick upon him, and say: "Jesus, sir! are you but there yet? And are you gotten no further yet than to the objection of Elias, and the like? I much wonder to find such a doubt in you as this, which hath been answered a thousand times; and no man replies upon our answers; but they are fully still as fresh with the same objection, as if still they were in the first day of their dreams." He was then very much pricked; and told me with more feeling than ordinary that my wonder was rather a wonder of ignorance and pride than a show either of any good desire to be instructed in his religion, or of any great ability to uphold mine own; for that we all could not

tell how to make any good answer to that one objection. We seldom met after upon such arguments, but I passed my time with him in much gust; for there was not such company in the whole world.

But within a while after I was first restrained, I omitted not to be often sending the assurances of my humble service to my Lord of Salisbury.* And I informed him early enough that I remembered very well upon what terms we had formerly been, about some little thing which was mine, and which I had desired him to free out of his hands, before I then had departed last out of England; that now, upon my return, I had found myself to be unoppressed in my poor fortune through his great favours; that the notice which men took of his goodness towards me had saved me out of the worst part of the storm; for now I was sitting, well clad, and well fed, and by a good fire; and esteemed it to be all long of him that I was worse treated than to starve. And therefore I humbly prayed him to receive some such testimony of homage at my hands as I was ready to lay at his feet, and namely, that he would be pleased to accept that very thing, as a poor present from me,

* "My Lord of Salisbury" is, of course, not the Bishop of Salisbury (as Dr. Neligan supposed), but Robert Cecil Lord Salisbury.—ED.

about which I had been so unhappy as to contest with his Lordship in former times.

He made me this most noble answer: that he took this overture very well at my hands; that it would greatly accommodate him in somewhat, which he had taken much to heart; that he accepted of the offer, though not in any such manner as I had made it; but that how much soever he desired and affected the thing, he yet was absolutely resolved never to have it but upon returning me the full value thereof. In a word, I was as proud as he, and my importunity was extreme that he would accept thereof as a present; but, at length, he would needs be obeyed, and I was fain to be so mean as to set a price, though indeed I made it as moderate as handsomely and probably I could. But he, on the other side, understood the art of it very well, and would needs give more, and yet more; insomuch as that at last he brought it, I think, almost at the just price.

During all the time of my imprisonment, this great and gallant man would needs be putting daily favours upon me, sometimes by giving me lights concerning mine own condition, sometimes by way of advice how to carry myself in order to my addresses and estate; and besides out of his

great desire to obtain me some little part of the King's favour, he was earnest with me to write him some letter, which might be monstrable by him to the King, and which might be so cast, both for matter and form, in order to the oath of allegiance, as that his Majesty might take contentment in it, and so lessen, if not remove, his displeasure towards me.

I despaired, at that time, of being able to give his Majesty satisfaction, and therefore I much desired to decline all such occasions as might put me in hazard. But in fine, there was no remedy, and I must needs do it; for Sir John Dackombe, and that other rare man Sir George Calvert,* who then had very near relation to him, were often employed by his Lordship to me, both about this particular, and many other also at that time. And so I wrote a long letter to him, upon that argument, and I made it as full of temper as I could possibly without disadvantage to truth. But he, who knew the King's humour, observed that it might be likelier to do me hurt than good; and therefore he thought fit to return it to me, in a paper under his own hand and seal, that so it might be sure to do me no harm.

After this, he grew extremely desirous to see

* Sir G. Calvert, first Lord Baltimore.—Ed.

if it were possible for me to be satisfied in point of conscience concerning the oath. For this purpose, he had a design that I should speak with Mr. Blackwell, the Archpriest, about it. I confess that, for my part, I had no mind at all to that business; for I was sure that I would never take an oath, which, so punctually and precisely, had been condemned and prohibited by the See Apostolic. And I feared, on the other side, that Mr. Blackwell's importunity, without success upon me, would make my case much the worse. But my Lord of Salisbury had other thoughts, and conceived that I would perhaps be persuaded; and then, he knew, I might be safe. And he had most particular desires to make the world perceive men whom I named before, and there was no remedy but I must go to the Clink, to speak with Mr. Blackwell there.

I went, and spoke with him at large; and he spake also more largely with me. In substance, I take God to witness, I conceive not that he said anything at all, which ought to make a Christian believe but that there is as much power in the Church over all persons, in certain enormous, scandalous, and incorrigible cases, as the oath would make a man forswear; but only he affirmed that this power might perhaps be exercised unduly

at some times, and by some Popes, and rather *ad ruinam* than *ad aedificationem Ecclesiae;* and that it was not in such cases to be obeyed. Now, there is no man who doubts of this; and therefore it neither served by way of instruction and satisfaction to make me yield to any such thing, as I had no mind to do; nor yet by way of excuse for that which he had already done. He drew that discourse of his into great length; but this was certainly the sum of all the real part thereof. The rest was a great deal of insatisfaction in him that both myself and others would not take the oath. And, for my part, he told me plainly that he knew me better by report than to think that I had not wit and knowledge enough to understand that I might take it lawfully, yea, and, indeed, that I ought to do it; but that he thought I conceived that he followed that opinion which was less plausible abroad; and that a man must lose credit by it; and that so I rejected it upon that reason. I heard as much as was said, and I pitied the poor old man; and I pardoned his great fear, his desire of life, and, in a word, all his frailty much more easily than I could do his not permitting that a man might forbear, with a good conscience, to take that oath, which had been condemned over and over by the See Apostolic; which oath he

would yet needs think that both himself and others might take without any offence to a good conscience, upon no other reason (for aught I know) but only because it might seem a better thing to be safe than subject to any trouble, with great danger. And whereas I remember I told him that I had heard how formerly himself had forbidden Catholics to take the oath, when once the Pope's Breve had been published, and when himself had not been yet apprehended; and that now I must therefore needs find it strange to see that a prison could not only teach him how to take it, but make him declare also that all men were expressly bound to do it. His answer was this: that which you say of me is true; but you infer, like a young man, upon it; for *Vexatio dat intellectum.* This he said, and this was in effect all that I also said; and I take God to witness that I say true; and I can do no less than protest it, because the answer was so silly, and so contrary even to all common sense, that it cannot be very easily believed. For as I told him, so it is most true and most clear that crosses are wont to bring men into their wits, when they draw them to forsake the conveniences, delights, and commodities of flesh and blood, which tend to the offence of Almighty God; but that usually, when men are brought, by the fear

of greater crosses and afflictions, to seek for temporal safety, and liberty, and life, that kind of vexation should never be thought or said to bring men back into their wits, but to carry them further off from thence. But howsoever we parted then, and though it were not uncivilly on either side, yet I believe we were very little pleased on both. I judged it by what I saw and heard of him, and I know it by what I felt in myself; for, indeed, I came much not only unsatisfied by him, but averted also from him in my very heart.

But now my Lord of Salisbury, who was so careful to procure this conference, would not be slack to know the issue thereof, and, indeed, he was so desirous, that there was no remedy but he would have it from myself. I attended him therefore at Whitehall; and he asked me, in cheerful manner, if the Archpriest had given me any satisfaction. And I told him that, if it pleased him, I would most faithfully relate the whole story, and that himself should then be judge whether I had reason to be satisfied by him, or no. He both accepted and liked the condition, and so, commanding the doors to be shut, he desired me to relate what had passed. I did so, most particularly. My Lord thanked me, and protested that he believed me; that he was sorry that the Arch-

priest had not persuaded me; but yet that really he must confess that his discourse gave me no cause to change my mind.

After this the clouds came thick upon me; needy persons were looking after me; and I was advised by some friends rather to retire myself handsomely out of the way, for the safety of the poor fortune which I enjoyed, than still to be shut up in prison, and to expose my whole estate to the first beggar. I gave way to be so disposed of, and though I went over with a fair licence, yet I was directed in mine ear not to return, till the King's further pleasure were first known.

I cast therefore my estate into money; and I parted, upon the hasty sale, with a loss of a great part of the true value; and when I had put it into my purse, I was to make it over, with a very great deal of disadvantage, by reason that the exchanges abroad were all so very high at that time. I therefore endured the loss of above ten in the hundred upon that occasion, though my Lord of Salisbury (who kept a continual watch upon me, to do me all honour and favour) pressed me much that he might do me the courtesy of remitting all my moneys at his charge, which would have cost him no inconsiderable sum. But I was not poor enough to need, and much less to accept, so great a

favour of such a kind; and so my hands received it not, though my heart did.

But now, before I passed the sea, I was delivered out of the Fleet, and committed for some two months to the house of a most noble, civil friend of mine, Mr. Edward Jones, for the more easy despatch of my domestical affairs. I was visited there daily by a multitude of persons, and, now and then, I was vexed a little (and it was but a little) by men who would be talking to me of religion.

But when once I had made an end of my other businesses, I disposed myself to begin my journey into foreign parts, where I continued above twelve years together. And having about the end of that time made an acquaintance in France with Mr. Villiers, who grew afterwards to be the King's favourite and Duke of Buckingham; and he, remembering, when he was come home, the civilities which had passed between him and me at Paris, and how it had been my fortune to bid him return quickly into England, and to bespeak him, and to tell him, that he should prove the favourite of the time (which he published afterwards to all the world), he resolved to press King James that he would permit me to return into my country; to which, after great difficulties, his Majesty was con-

tent to give way. But because when he obtained the leave, he had done it with giving hope that I would be brought to take the oath, when I came home; and that I, being urged to take it, did still, though with good manners, refuse; the King held himself to be offended, and withal gave such way to the malice of two or three back-friends of mine, who were both great men and great Puritans, that I was fain, after staying in England almost two years, to retire myself once again beyond the seas. But within one year after, the times grew a little more easy, and a noble, and effectual real friend and favourer of mine, my Lord of Bristol,* had both so much good will, and so much power, as to obtain my absolute return home; where I have continued ever since; saving only when I went by the direction and commandment of King James to wait upon our present King, when he was in Spain.

When we all returned from thence, King James was pleased to put a visible mark of particular honour upon me, at the instance, as I think, of his Majesty that now is,† and partly also by means of the late Duke of Buckingham, who testified to King James how honestly I had

* *I.e.*, John Digby, first Earl of Bristol.—ED.
† Charles I.

carried myself in that journey. King James spake very graciously to me, but showed a more than ordinary trouble that the business then in hand had taken no better effect. But the Spaniards in the meantime suspected rashly, and concluded unjustly, against me, as if the favour, which I had received from the King, upon the motion of the Prince and Duke, had been a fruit, forsooth, of some ill office, which I, amongst many others, had applied myself to do them, at that time; a conceit both very foolish, and very false.

But upon this, the honours and favours which were done me at court, in the eye, as it were of my parents, made them grow on apace in being good to me many ways; for they were not only kind but careful too. And being once at my father's house, it fell out that there came by accident, if it were not rather by design, a kind of lusty knot, if it might not rather go for a little College, of certain eminent clergymen, Archdeacons, Doctors and Chaplains, into a good large room of the house, where both my father and my mother were; and so was I also myself, with many others of their great family. And first, after a little preface, some one of them grew to persuade me, and then some other; and they all came in, sooner or later, to fill up the cry, for making me

return to my former religion, upon such pretences as they called reasons for what they said. It would cost no less than a volume to set all their foolish motives down, which had been made by others both in books and sermons and discourse, a hundred thousand times over; and which had been so often answered, and fully satisfied by Catholics; saving that Protestants have made some vow to be generally still making the same objections, and still and still the same, as if they had never been made before, both by no means so much as to take knowledge that we have given them any answers; and much less to have made reply upon them. But my answer to their discourse was, to thank them much for their good will which they seemed to bear me, since they persuaded me to nothing but that which themselves professed to believe and embrace. I put them also in mind of the many favours, which they had received of my parents; that I would presume that they were honest and grateful men, and that they would omit no diligence to do the uttermost of what they could, for the compassing and contriving of that which they professed to conceive to be my greatest good. I told them that as there was but one God, and one Saviour of the world, and one Church wherein he would be believed and served,

so was it evident by several places of Holy Scripture that this one Church must be continually visible to the eyes of men; that this Church was to be a visible and even a kind of glorious Church in this world; and that therefore I might well expect at their hands that they should show me some such Church of their religion, as had continued ever since Christ our Lord, and had been derived down to this age; whereby I might be assured that some mighty parts of the world had professed their religion ever since that time. But yet, that I would not tie them to so hard conditions as to produce such Monarchies and Empires, no, nor yet any great provinces, or so much as shires, yea, or even cities, which had continually believed and professed their religion; nay, that I would not so much as oblige them to show me any one single town or city, which professed in all former ages as now they did; but let them only bring me any one village, yea, or even one single family alone, where there was but even some one pastor, and some one single sheep, a hundred years ago, and so upward for as long or little time as they would, who had preached and professed as they do now, and I protested that I would go upon the Sunday following to their sermons. And for fear lest they should say that some former professor of some of

their doctrines (whom I call heretics for many other most impious opinions, which they obstinately held in difference even from Protestants themselves, but whom they will needs call Protestants, as agreeing with themselves in some things) did conceive with them in all substantial and fundamental points, and that they were but toys wherein they differed (whereas yet, in very truth, any one point of doctrine, being obstinately held, in disobedience to the holy Catholic Church is able to damn a soul by the judgment of the holy Fathers of the most primitive times), I offered to become one of theirs, if they could show me any such men as believed but even the self same canon of Holy Scripture, and the same number and nature of sacraments, which were received by them at this day. And I hoped they would not affirm but that the Holy Scriptures and the holy Sacraments are of the most important and essential things of all Christian religion.

When I had expressed myself thus, it was strange enough to see how they wrung their hands, and how their whites of eyes were turned up, and their devout sighs were sent abroad to testify both their wonder and grief that I would utter myself after that manner. And they also talked much to me (though it were very little to the pur-

pose) of Wicliff, the Waldenses, and John Huss, to all which I answered at great ease, as, indeed, any child might have done. For who knows not that they were all notorious heretics, not only in our opinion, but even in theirs, if they would but well consider what abominable doctrines they held, which I cited to them at the same time. I prayed them also to reflect upon a multitude of those most important doctrines, wherein both those former men and we agree, which yet the Protestants detest. And thirdly, I made them see that if those heretics had been as strict Protestants as these men pretend, yet would not that humour be found to have continued in the world any long time; but might seem to have rather been but like some bubble of water, or else like some squib of fire, which is wont to come and go at an instant, but not like the light of God's Church, which is to be as the sun, and that no less constant than it is clear; and therefore theirs ought to have appeared sooner and lasted longer, and been always more consonant to itself, than theirs ever was.

But then divers of them thought fit to wonder at me still, and yet they did but say in general terms that they were very able to show not only some few families or little towns, which had

always professed their religion, but many cities also and provinces and kingdoms, in divers parts of the world, and this not only a hundred years ago, but five hundred, and a thousand, and ever since the first founding of a Christian Church. But they seemed, indeed, to wonder at me so very much that so they might abuse the hearers, thereby, who were many; and I held myself obliged to take them a little short, in these words: "I protest before Almighty God, I have said nothing to you but what I thought; and, indeed, I do not only think it, but know it. As for you, I humbly pray you not to talk any longer, but to prove. Let me know what the men were that believed a hundred years ago as you do now. What were their names? where dwelt they? who was the pastor? who, the sheep? with whom did they communicate? what was the confession of their faith? what the canon of their Scripture? what the number and nature of their sacraments? I hear you say and say, but let me see when you will say and prove; for it is then, and not till then, that you shall have me as good as my word. But I know you can never do that; and so you will never be able to give me cause to do this. I will believe you, as I said before, to be morally honest, and well-meaning men; and that you are grateful

for the great benefits which you have received from my friends; and that you desire my conversion to you very much; and that you would be glad to buy it at a good rate. And, therefore, if you can show and prove, according to that which I have desired, do it soundly, and do it quickly; and, upon my faith, I will be at a sermon with you on Sunday. If therefore I hear not from you, I am resolved what to think, and so the world may easily take knowledge that, since you would so fain say somewhat, you are all extremely unable to do it, if you do it not." They heard, and still, I think, resolved to be wondering at me, after the same manner, but (otherwise than by fair words and great protestations) not to let me hear of them any more; for neither did they ever come nor send to me afterwards.

But yet, even after this, my parents would sometimes be touching upon me concerning matter of religion, though still they would rather do it by sighs, and short wishes than long discourses. And my father would ever choose rather to put some fit book into my hand than to enter into any express discourse; though when he chanced to speak and tell me what a cross and disadvantage it was to him, in all respects, that I should be of that religion which I professed, and what a comfort

to him it would be if I returned to his; my custom was to excuse myself by saying to him after this manner: that my body and my fortune, and whatsoever I might care for of this world, were his, and to be his; but my soul, which was immediately and only created by Almighty God, and infused into this body, was only God's and mine; that it was I who must give a strict account thereof, and that, in my judgment, I had seen so many unanswerable reasons for the truth of that religion which I then professed, that I durst not upon any terms either formerly forbear to embrace it, or else presume them to forsake it. And so, under the only reason of not daring to renounce the Catholic Roman faith, for fear of the displeasure of Almighty God, and the utter damnation of my soul, I made it most decent for myself to set forth, after a very exact manner, all those arguments and motives which, indeed, prevailed most upon me, and which I thought were also the fittest to work upon and put scruple into him. And really, as in the sight of God, I protest, we seldom parted but that, I thought, he was full of difficulty, about knowing how to proceed between that which he found to be easiest, and that which he judged to be best, which Best, not only in my conscience, but in his own also (as I verily think) was to

embrace my belief; though yet withal, he would needs, I think, make himself hope that the course wherein he was might fall out to be excusable in some sort; partly by reason of those common grounds of Christianity, which stand, or seem to stand, between us both; but especially by the establishment of Protestant religion in this Kingdom, by the Parliament and Convocation-house here. In regard whereof, I have particular reasons to conceive that he thought he might, with a kind of no great unlawfulness, press me still in earnest manner to carry myself in religion as himself did; which yet, in my very conscience, I think he did not resolve, himself, to be the best. But his age was then very great; and his interests sat close upon him; and so he came shortly afterward to die in the self same manner as he had lived; leaving matter of much grief to my heart, for I doubt his case is not the better now for his having seen and heard that from me, which I presumed to declare to him then.

My mother was much more fervent towards the Puritanical sole-Scripture way, and was ever upon all occasions wont to be as busy with Scripture as if it had been some glove upon her fingers' ends; and, accordingly, she was held in a mighty kind of opinion with that sort of people. With me she

would speak little of religion, because she had not found that she was likely to gain much by that bargain. But yet she would be telling me often how much she prayed to the Lord for me, whilst I, on the other side, would also be far from failing to let her know whatsoever I conceived to import her for the good of her soul. Yet it wrought no effect at all upon her; for she died, not long after, in a most miserable manner. For when her last sickness assaulted her, she could not, with all her Scriptures, find in her heart to think of dying, by any means, nor ever almost be persuaded so much as to pray at all, though she were much called upon, and though, during her health, she could be still talking of it. And, which makes her case fit to be lamented much the more, she continued, to all purposes, of perfect sense and understanding throughout her whole sickness. And yet, instead of disposing herself for God, and preparing herself to die, she would be still diverting and entertaining herself otherwise, and still be calling for her silks, and works, with other toys and trinkets of that kind, so that finally she went out of the world more like an ignorant child of four years old, than like a talking Scripturist of almost four score. And I have learnt the truth of these things from such as were present with her at that time,

and who were of her own religion, and were scandalized and afflicted to see her death, and how hardly she could be drawn to pray. And the God of heaven sees my heart, and how afflicted and wounded it is to reflect upon the misery of her end; but he knows that I relate it merely in the nature of paying an homage to his Divine Majesty, and to the truth of his religion in the holy Catholic Church, whilst I show how the most forward and talking Protestants and Puritans have but the bark of the tree, without the juice; and the shell, without the kernel; and that indeed, how warm and well-wrapped soever they think themselves to be, whilst the fair cold weather lasts, and are here at home, yet their cloak hath as many holes in it as a sieve, which is far from being able to keep out a storm.

Now this is the historical part of that which concerned my conversion, as also of such accidents as had the greatest and nearest relation to me upon that occasion. And now before I grow to a final period thereof, I must needs tell you, though in very few words, of that which is the cause why I have troubled you with so tedious a discourse, about many things, which, perhaps, you will not otherwise have very much cared to know. But you commanded me to set down the story; and there-

fore you must have it as it is; and you must undergo the trouble of taking it in such sort as I show it, like a pension wherewith the land is charged.

You must therefore be content to consider that unspeakable kind of mercy, wherewith it pleased Almighty God to overshadow me, after my conversion, even in all temporal respects also as well as others; that so you may discern how gracious and good a master God Almighty is, and how worthy he is to be served by the whole world; since he vouchsafes to deal so tenderly with them, who, by his holy grace (without which they cannot think a good thought), proceed not mechanically and upon conditions and capitulations with him, but cast themselves totally, and even, as it were blindfold, and bound hand and foot, into the arms of his protection and good pleasure. For you have seen how it stood with me in the beginning; and how the enemy of mankind taking the advantage of mine own corrupt nature, sought to stay me from being converted to the holy Catholic religion, upon many fears and frights, which he laid before me. And here you may see also how the mercy of Almighty God vouchsafed, as a man may say, to reward himself, for it was only his great goodness which enabled me to overcome the difficulties which threatened me.

My parents grew kind towards me, yea and careful of me, and bountiful to me; and expressed not only their love, but such a particular kind of respect as was very extraordinary for parents to show towards a son. And though it grew at length to be less tender in my mother than formerly it had been, I impute it but to the craft of certain persons, who, distracting her mind from me by other motives, sought to fasten that wound upon my person for the hatred which they bore to my religion.

That great man,* who had formerly borne a most particular hatred against me, when I was of the same religion with himself, grew to be of the noblest and greatest friends that I ever had in my whole life, upon my being a Catholic declared. And particularly I conceive that Almighty God was pleased to allow me unexpected comfort in these two kinds, because they were my greatest temptations; and his mercy made me able to overcome them.

It is true that my temporal means was lessened almost to the one half by a very hasty sale, which I was fain to make thereof, for fear of worse. But yet still, that which was left was abundant, and afterwards my parents themselves gave also good

* Cecil, Lord Salisbury.—Ed.

supplies; yea, and formerly I had received some such light from a certain Catholic, in the sale of some lands, as it is probable I should have wanted in Protestancy. I acknowledged that kindness in him, who did me the courtesy, with much bounty, though afterwards he fell into some miseries, whereby he was loaden with wants, which kept him from being so constant in acknowledging my kindness to him, as I had showed myself for his to me. And upon the whole matter I can, without vanity, and may, with much gratitude to God, affirm that I have never been either in want or near it; but my hands have always been full of money, and my fortune far superior to my expense; and so my mind at ease. And, in fine, I have been ever the more able to lend my friends my service in that kind than obliged to expect it from them.

My country I lost many years, which yet God gave me life and health to expect; and he also raised me friends, whereby I recovered it; and amongst whom I enjoy it with as much honour and advantage of many kinds, as any man of my poor condition hath received; yea and, in my conscience, I think, with more than I should have been admitted to, if I had been a Protestant. So that these things may well be able to teach that part of the world, which shall hereafter come to understand

of my little story, how they are to cast themselves headlong into the hands of God; and especially to instruct myself that I am ever to be kept in fresh memory of how infinitely I have been obliged to his Divine Majesty, and how carefully I am bound to serve him all the days of my life: Amen.

*I take God humbly to witness that all this relation aforesaid is entirely true.

TOBIE MATTHEW.

London, the 8th of 7ber 1640.

* Down to "Amen" the original MS., though corrected throughout by Sir Tobie, is in another hand. From "I take" is in his own handwriting. The nine signatures on the next page are autograph.—ED.

We here underwritten affirm that we have heard Sir Tobie Matthew declare and take it upon his soul, that both the relation of his conversion, which is here set down in this book, as also the following short discourse which he calls by the name of *Posthumus, or the Survivor* are entirely true, to the best of his understanding and memory. Both which are signed by his own hand. He also holds the following five-and-twenty considerations in order to Religion to be very considerable and true.

ELIZABETH MORDAUNT.
ANNE MORDAUNT. ELIZABETH PETRE.
GEORGE WINTOUR. FFRAN. PETRE.
EDWARD GULYARD. EDWARD YOUNG.
EDWARD GULDEGORDE.
THOS. JAMES.

POSTHUMUS,

OR

THE SURVIVOR.

WITH CERTAIN CONSIDERATIONS,

WHICH FOLLOW.

POSTHUMUS,

OR

THE SURVIVOR.

I FIND myself so daily subject to indispositions and infirmities, and so full also of years, which now pass three-score, as to give me good assurance that my life is not to last very long. So that it imports me enough to consider well what things I may esteem it fit for me to deliver myself of, before I die; and to execute them also with speed, if I desire to be sure not to be surprised.

Now one of those in particular upon which I have fully resolved is to leave behind me a Protestation of some things concerning myself, which I must needs know much better than any other; and of some other things also concerning others, wherein my declaration may at least be as probable and fit to be believed as the opinion of some other men may be. And to this end, that I may be credited the more, in what I am about to say, I take Almighty God to witness for the truth

of it all, so far as that if I shall say such or such a thing is true; or, such or such a thing I know; or, such or such a thing I conceive; that thing shall be true, and shall be known, and so conceived of by me, as I shall answer the contrary thereof to God himself at the day of Judgment. And though, when I am now writing this, I am (I humbly thank God) in perfect health (at least as good as in this evening of my day I may ever hope to have in this world), yet to make the sin more criminal, yea and more capital, to me, if I should be so very wicked as to deliver any untruth in this paper, I humbly beseech God even now, that my soul may so find him merciful to me, in the hour of my death, more or less, as I shall, more or less sincerely and truly express myself here.

My purpose also is, that, if it please God to call me to him by the way of sickness, and if that happen to me at home, and if [I] shall then remember that I have written such a paper as this, to call for the said paper into my hands, and then and there to protest upon my death-bed that I have spoken nothing in it but truth, and that I ask so much right of the world as to be believed therein.

I declare therefore, in the first place, that I live in the profession of the Roman Catholic faith,

wherein, by God's holy grace, I fully purpose to die. But I know it hath been doubted by many whether really, when I professed it first, I were indeed a Catholic, or no; and whether also I had not left my Protestant religion upon discontentments and ends.

In answer I affirm most truly that when I became first a Catholic, I did it with all sincerity of mind, and so far I was from being wrought by it, by any temporal respects, that I found they were all directly cross to my intention. And as, for my part, on the one side, I went to make that change upon a precise necessity of conscience (wherein I conceived myself to be) to acknowledge and confess the Catholic Church, communicating over the whole world, with the Bishop of Rome, to be the only true Church of Christ our Lord; so, on the other, I had extreme difficulty and aversion from making myself a member thereof, in regard of the great disadvantages, displeasures, and dangers, to which I must be obnoxious thereby. Besides that, I had even then some little doubts in my understanding part. But at length it pleased Almighty God to give, out of his infinite mercy, more light to my understanding, and to add more and more heat to my will, for the working through those frights, and sweats, and agonies of perplexity and

desolation wherein I found myself at that time, through the deadly desire which I had of not embracing the Catholic Roman faith. These conflicts were so much the more painful to me, and they lasted so much the longer with me, and returned so much the fiercelier upon me, for that I fought all these combats against the world, the flesh, and the devil hand to hand, without any help of this world; since no creature of any country, and much less, in this case, of mine own, was made privy, in the least kind, to my purpose. But I thought, and studied, and considered, and prayed, and hoped, and feared, between God only and myself; till at length it was his pleasure to make me victorious by his grace (upon such motive as I will here set down), and to receive me as a weak, unworthy member of his Church; for which I humbly offer him the praises of all those Blessed Spirits, who are reigning with him now in his glory. But the story of my whole conversion is drawn particularly and exactly by myself; and as, if it ever come to public view, it will perhaps be the less unpleasing to any reader in regard that it opens a fair way to many passages of several kinds, so I can and do affirm, upon my conscience, as in the sight of Almighty God himself, that all the parts of it are most perfectly and precisely true.

I have since met, in process of time, with divers great objections against Catholics; and amongst the rest, with this, as if we were pensioners to foreign Princes; as not being good subjects to the King; and as if we had designs against the State, &c.

By way of answer, I take God to witness that I have never, in my whole life, known any one subject of the King's, in this kingdom, receive any one pension, or any other pecuniary profit, of any Prince in Europe; for I mean not to make it my business now to consider whether any of our seminaries or monasteries have any pensions from Popes or Princes, or no, towards the breeding of priests for the mission of England. But as for all particular men, who live here and in obedience under this Crown, I never knew any one, in my whole life, who received pension or profit from any foreign Prince in the world. And let God so be good to my soul, when I shall die, as he knows I speak nothing but truth.

And as for our not being *good* subjects, and carrying disaffections, or having ill designs against the King or State; I take God most solemnly to witness that I never knew, or so much as probably heard (to the very uttermost of my remembrance), of any disloyal purpose, which was harboured by

any subject of the King's, either at home or abroad, against his person or crown, his prosperity or his safety, in any kind at all, or in the least degree; except only such few as were publicly known, and were convicted, and suffered for it in the sight of the world. I deny not (because it is absolutely impossible for any creature to know) but that there may also perhaps have been divers other ill subjects to the King, who may have had some ill design against his Majesty; but that which I here affirm (and upon which I renounce God's mercy if I say not true) is that I never knew of any other than such as I spake of before. And when I say it is I who affirm it, I conceive that the circumstance of the person is considerable enough. For I have many and many years upon my back; I have spent above twenty of them in foreign parts, and divers of them in such places as were not most improbable for temptation and danger; and I have conversed with multitudes of people of several nations and conditions; and it would not have been easy for very much of this kind to have been stirring but that in likelihood I must needs have met with some air of it, whether I would or no, in so many years of a life spent like mine. And yet, I take God to witness, that even I, with being the man whom I have here described, did never, in my whole life,

understand or come to know of any one such thing.

I have also met with another objection, as if there were strange differences, even amongst Catholics themselves, concerning certain doctrines; and particular about these—the doctrine of equivocation, and that of obedience to Princes, and thirdly, concerning the question of keeping, or not keeping, faith with heretics; and finally, they charge as deeply that some of us, here in England, are much more blameable than the rest for being more opposite than others to the ways of temper and moderation; whereas they inform the world that the sweeter and milder spirits, both of the one belief and the other, dispose themselves with much civility to meet in some good agreement concerning religion. Now these objections are made not only by a multitude of Protestants, but (as I have just cause to believe) by some few Catholics also, who, upon the price of picking a thank with the State, for their own supposed temper, are content to let some words fall, which tend to the charging others with a contrary humour; and I pray God it be not laid heavily to their charge. As for me, I have waded, as often and as deeply as I could, so to meet with the very bottom of the business; and I take Almighty God to witness that I have been

able to discover no other thing than that which shall follow here, and the words of a dying man may well deserve to be believed.

Concerning the doctrine aforesaid, I find no difference at all between the judgment of the clergy of England and that of other places abroad; or of the secular clergy and that of the regular in this kingdom; and no difference also at all between the regulars in general of any one Order and the regulars in general of any other. And I think it will be hard to find any one such proposition in any author of any one Order as may not be well matched with the like in some author of the other Orders; and, if I be deceived, let what I say here be confuted.

And as for that other charge of being too rigorous, and, as it were, inflexible towards all temper: I have but this to say, which my heart thinks, namely, that some one priest or two of the secular clergy, or some one religious man or two of some regular Order (they being perhaps less exact and recollected for their particulars than the rest of their own bodies are, and perhaps also contenting themselves to have a little of the flatterer and time-pleaser in them, yea and peradventure not being wholly free from envy against some others, who are more strict and punctual in doing

their duties to God and to his Church than themselves) may, with art enough, have let fall some such discourse as this, in the ears of some of the greatest and most considerable Protestants of this kingdom; as if, forsooth, some Catholics were rather furiously than fairly bent against those steps towards moderation, which those others will needs pretend to draw on.

But in this I can also most truly take God to witness that upon the strictest inquiry that I have possibly been ever able to make, I could never come directly to find what that temper and moderation was; and upon what distinct articles and terms it was to stand, which was pretended to be so much desired by some, and was said to be so bitterly rejected by others. And the further I went in their search, the more able I found myself to discern that even those very men, who wanted themselves to be of the most temperate, would never touch in public upon the moderating of any one point, in the way either of doctrine or practice, which the men accused of most rigour were not also as fully willing to accept as they. Provided always that nothing were to be done which might derogate in the least degree from the nature and duty of being true and sincere Catholics, and of obeying the See Apostolic entirely in all things

which concern our faith; and especially when it reiterates the same orders; for that shows that it was not formerly surprised; and it must not, in some cases, be disobeyed for the gaining of a thousand worlds, and the saving of a million of lives.

This is most certainly true; and the rest is a most slanderous untruth. The self same I also affirm (as I was saying before) forasmuch as may relate to the doctrine of obedience to secular Princes, as also to that other of equivocation; and finally also that which concerns the holding faith with heretics. For I clearly find and directly know that there is no difference at all in the generality of English Catholics of any condition or of any Order from any other. But because some particular men must ever be more eminent, and exact, and exemplar than the rest, and therefore more apt to be envied, and others also are more large, and remiss, and therefore more apt to malign; from hence we come to find that there are such misreports given out. Wherein they are very likely to make so much the more shift to get credit, because the men whom they charge with distemper are the most watchful in defence of that which goes for the known Catholic doctrine; and do both speak most, and write most, for support thereof,

according to the occasion. And from hence it is no uneasy step, by which this popular and ill-grounded opinion may get up, and therefore they are of the more strict in propounding different doctrines from others, because generally they are indeed of the most diligent to instruct men to embrace those doctrines which the Catholic Church propounds to be believed, whether they be penal here, or no. So that really, and as in the sight of God, there is no division of opinion at all between the branches of the English Catholic body about these things. And moreover and in particular concerning that last point, of keeping or not keeping faith with heretics, I esteem (if it be possible) that it is a greater calumny than any of the rest; for the contrary is so expressly and clearly taught, that there is not the least colour for this slander. And Becanus shows and proves in print the truth of what I say.

This was then the substance of that which I was desirous to relate, or rather, as it were, to sign and seal with my last blood, since I write it as with the hand of a dying man, concerning all those particulars which I have touched; and I am in good hope that it may be pleasing to Almighty God for me to have testified my knowledge and belief of these things. For all such as will do me

the right to believe that I am not most infamously wicked and false must at least be much less violent in continuing their own misconceits; and will perhaps be more inclined to look into these things with their own eyes, and so grow to live and move in the way to heaven, according to the pulse of their own instructed and well-informed hearts. And as, in the beginning of this short discourse, I declared and protested that the motives of my conversion to Catholic religion were no way temporal, or laid upon any worldly design, so now in the very end both of this paper and of my life, I will declare to my survivors not only what the motives were not, but what they also were, which wrought most upon me; and I will do it after a summary manner; for I must but touch and go. These heads I put together heretofore, but I have communicated them to some friend, upon a certain occasion, though independently upon any such discourse as I have held in this paper hitherto. But now I will annex them here to this; and they shall last after me, as long as it may please Almighty God to give them life, for his own immortal glory and the good of souls. And though formerly they were reflected upon by me as reasons and motives but to myself, yet here I send them out in form of a funeral advice to the reader, that he may vouch-

safe to look upon them with a careful eye. For so both he and myself will have the less cause to be sorry, for having taken this little pains.

* Signed by me in London, as in the presence of Almighty God, for most certainly and entirely true; upon the 8th day of 7ber 1640.

TOBIE MATTHEW.

[seal]

* The text, as in the first part, is in the handwriting of a scrivener. From the word "signed" is in Sir Tobie's hand.

A Protestant Soul which is piously affected, and procures to be saved, must not fail to consider, and consider well, the Particulars, which follow here.

1. Consider in the first place, and do it daily, more and more, how certain death is, and how uncertain the hour of death, and to what a strict account we shall all be called at that hour, for all the deeds, and words, and thoughts of our whole life. And that both the writer and reader of this very paper shall then be most severely examined, about the use which we shall have made thereof, whether it be good or bad.

2. Consider that Christ our Lord, being both true God and man, came to redeem and save the whole world by his doctrine, and the example of his blessed life, and by the torments and passion of his bitter death. All which neither ever did, nor ever will, bring any one soul to heaven of itself alone, nor by any other way at all unless it be applied to the soul by the very self same means, which the infinite wisdom and goodness of Almighty God himself hath appointed and ordained.

3. Consider that some of those religions which profess the name of Christ our Lord are wont to pretend and teach that the only means of applying the merit of our Blessed Saviour's life and death to our souls is faith. But the Catholic Church decrees and declares that besides our faith in believing all the mysteries of Christian religion, and our hope in relying upon the power and promises of God's mercy, there must be also charity, for the keeping of his commandments and laws. For, as St. John the Evangelist affirms,* he that saith he loves God, and doth not keep his commandments, is a liar. And whensoever they are broken by us, there must be a reversing and taking away of the offence which was committed by thought, word, and deed by the penance both of thought, word, and deed; and namely by the sorrow and contrition of the heart, by the confession of the mouth, and by the satisfaction of the hand, or work.

4. Consider that if the means of applying the precious blood of Christ our Lord to the cleansing and forgiving of our sinful souls be obstinately mistaken, all is lost. And therein we must not rely upon our own deceivable opinions and fancies, but upon the directions and decrees of God's true Catholic Church.

* Jo. 14, 15. 1 Jo. 2, 4.

5. Consider what visible marks are delivered by the prophets of the Old Testament, whereby to foretell what kind of body or congregation the Church of Christ our Lord should be afterward. As also what is affirmed of the same true Catholic Church by the mouth of Christ our Lord and by his blessed Apostles in the New Testament.

6. Consider that in the Old Testament it is foretold:* that the true Church of Christ our Lord should be the converter of Pagan nations from idolatry; that it should be spread to the very ends of the whole earth; that kings should be the nursing-fathers and queens the nursing-mothers of this Church; that God would so espouse himself to this Church as that he would never be divorced from it; that continual watch and ward should be kept by God's servants over this Church; that a clean and pure sacrifice should daily be offered up to Almighty God in this Church; that the Princes and Potentates of the earth should do reverence and homage to this Church, and even lick the very dust of her feet; and that this Church should ever be a visible Church, even as a mighty and huge mountain is visible with many other attributes, and expressions, and significations of this kind.

* Isa. 18, 19 et 66, 20. Psal. 2, 23; 60, 11. Ose. 2, 12. Isa. 62, 6. Malach. 1, 11. Isa. 49, 23. Zach. 8, 3.

7. Consider that in the New Testament both divers of the same advantages and divers others also are set down.* For St. Paul declares expressly: that the Church was both the pillar and foundation of truth; that the Doctors and Pastors of this Church were to continue so visible to the world's end, as that they were to keep men from error, and from floating up and down into uncertainties, either upon the erroneous or malicious persuasion of wicked men. Christ our Lord with his own blessed mouth declares: that he would remain with this Church to the very consummation of the world; that whosoever should hear, that is, obey his Apostles and disciples should be accounted to hear and obey himself; and whosoever should despise them, should be esteemed to despise him; that his Church was to be as a city upon a hill, and as a light upon a candlestick, and not under a bushel; that he would give the keys of heaven's-gates into the hands of his Apostles, and most eminently, and by name, to St. Peter, whom he commanded as he loved him to feed both his sheep and his lambs, that is, both clergymen and laymen, and whom he required (after himself should once be thoroughly converted

* 1 Tim. 3, 15. Ephes. 4, 11 et 14. Math. 28, 20. Luc. 10, 16. Math. 5, 15. Jo. 21, 15. Math. 16, 18; 18, 17; ibidem.

and established) to confirm the rest of his brethren, and whom he also assured that the gates of hell (whereby error and infidelity is signified) should never be able to prevail against this Church; that by giving these keys into their hands, for the opening and shutting of heaven's-gates, it is clear that men must confess their most secret sins to them; for else how should they know when they are either to open or to shut? that finally our Blessed Saviour commands all Christians both to hear and to obey this Church; and declares that if they do not, they must be held for no better than publicans and pagans. And he addresses them not to the Scripture, but to the Church; and he limits them not, in this recourse, to this or that particular occasion, with exclusion of the rest, but wherein soever any one Christian may scandalize and sin against his brother, which can no way be done so much as if he offer to destroy his soul by seeking to persuade him to a false religion. And he allows him no manner of appeal to any person or thing whatsoever from the sentence of this Church; neither to the private spirit of the Puritans, nor to the natural wit and reason of the Socinians, which indeed, in several terms, is no better than the self same thing; but in all questions, which concern the service of God, that

the Church must be obeyed, and the Church alone.

8. Consider that by this last direction of our Blessed Lord and Saviour, who commands everybody, and at all times, and in all ecclesiastical causes, to hear and obey this Church, he plainly and undoubtedly implies:* that this Church must be always visible; or else how can this commandment be always obeyed?—that it must be always infallible; for else how can we be sure that even Christ our Lord himself may not be the very leader of us into error, by our act of resolving to obey him? And finally, that it must be always One, and only One; for else we might perhaps, even whilst we were obeying the express commandments of Christ our Lord, commit an error or an idolatry, and so be damned; because, if there were diverse Churches opposite to one another, one Church might perhaps teach us immaculate truth, and the other at the same time teach us unpardonable error, whereof yet we could not be able to judge. But in the meantime consider you that the maintaining of Unity in God's Church is a great mark of being the true Church of God. And this helps to give a great evidence for the Catholic Roman Church, which is ever at unity with itself;

* Math. 26, 18. 1 Tim. 3, 15. 1 Pet. 3, 20.

and that Christian who obstinately differs from it, in any point of doctrine or discipline, is instantly and *ipso facto* no Catholic. Men may differ in all such things as are yet undetermined by the Church, without any breach of unity; because all such things are permitted as arbitrary till the Church decide them. But this consideration of unity tells also a very ill tale for all Protestants, who daily go differing from one another, as Calvin went from Luther, and Servetus from Calvin, and the Anabaptists from him and others, since that time, who all curse and excommunicate one another. Nay, not only Protestants have no unity, but it is absolutely an impossible thing that they should ever have and keep any, because they rest not upon any one infallible Judge, but rely upon their own particular opinions and fancies, in the admitting, translating, and interpreting of Holy Scriptures, wherein daily they are found to differ, not only from all others, but also from their very selves.

9. Consider that these places both of the Old and New Testament are clearly declared by the most holy and learned Doctors and Fathers of the Catholic Church,* and those of the most perfect primitive times to belong to the same Catholic Church, which communicates throughout the whole

* St. Augustin, St. Hierom, etc. passim.

world with the Bishop of Rome,* who is the successor of St. Peter, and the Vice-Gerent of Christ our Lord in all ecclesiastical causes.

10. Consider that St. John the Evangelist professes in one of his Epistles† that it is a particular mark of apostates, and heretics to have formerly been members of the Catholic Church, and most of them votaries and priests, and then to have departed out of that communion, and to have framed some sect, or coined some heresy, upon some pretext and passion, or other, by which they were and are called and known, as from Arius, Mannes, Pelagius, Aerius, Luther, Calvin, and the rest of that rabble were and are. And that Catholics cannot truly, or even so much as probably be assigned to have forsaken and left the other remaining communion of any other Church, wherein they were before, to be that thing which they are now.

11. Consider that since the way to heaven is narrow,‡ that Church is more likely to be the true Church, which puts a man to the more pain and

* *Vide* Jod. Coc. tom I., fol. 826. St. Aug. to 7, super gest. cum Emerit ultra medium ; Iren. de Unit. Eccles. c. 16, ultra med. Tom 3 de fide et Symb. c. 10. Tom 7 de Bapt. cont. Donat. 14, c. 18. Tom 41 de Serm. Dom. in Monte c. 7.

† 1 Jo. 2, 19.

‡ Luc. 13, 24. Math. 7, 13, 14.

care in following the directions thereof. And whatsoever may be ignorantly said to the contrary, the writer of this paper protests that he will pawn his life and his soul that Protestants cannot truly show any one doctrine of theirs which doth not bind a man to less difficulty and which doth not endow him with greater liberty than Catholic doctrine doth.

12. Consider and compare such persons as having been Catholics are become Protestants; and such Protestants, on the other side, as have grown to be Catholics; and most particularly consider such Catholic priests as have turned Protestants, and much more if they have proved ministers, and, on the other side, such Protestant laymen as have either proved Catholic priests or Religious men. And to weigh with an equal hand whether the Catholics who became Protestants did not live notoriously worse than they had done before; and the Protestants who became Catholics much better.

13. Consider whether you have heard of any Catholics who, at the point of death, have, merely through the desire of saving their souls, renounced Catholic religion to become Protestants; and, on the other side, whether you have not heard that many who have lived Protestants all their life did

yet, when they came to die, renounce that religion to become Catholics, through the only fear which they had left, lest otherwise their souls would be lost. Which shows that when men are in earnest, and that then they have either to be saved or damned, they are not very ignorant what they ought to do.

14. Consider that the whole race of men is apt enough of itself to be wicked in a high degree; and that they may be very sure to prove the worst of all whom God forsakes, and abandons most. And therefore that Catholics, when they will needs be, and continue, vicious, are many times the most vicious in the world, because God forsakes them most, as persons who have served themselves worst of the greatest helps which he gives to man towards his salvation; as namely, the holy sacraments of the Catholic Church, which are the very channels and conduits of the blood of Christ our Lord to man's soul. So that it is no good argument, whereby to prove the corruption of Catholic religion, because Catholics are said by Protestants to be the most vicious many times; when yet themselves are so indeed, rather more than less. But this argument on the other side is most undoubtedly sound and good: that wheresoever there are the most of the best men, most perfect in humility, in

purity, in patience, and in charity, and besides in performing those heroical, high acts of renouncing, by vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, all the most sensible delights of this world, even when they are not unlawful in themselves; in imitation of that most perfect, blessed life of Christ our Lord, and merely for the love of his Divine Majesty, and for the shame which generous minds will have to entertain that sinful body of theirs with delicacy, when the mystical and true head thereof, which is Christ our Lord himself, was overloaden with a crown of thorns; that is certainly, and without colour of any question, the best, and the purest, and the truest religion, or rather, indeed, that religion which may only be accounted good, pure, and true. And this perfection of these men is indeed a most excellent argument for the truth of Catholic religion, because it is only God who can enable men, even with gust, to renounce the glory and pleasure of this world, as we see he makes millions of gallant, beautiful, powerful, learned people do, in the holy Catholic Church, for the mere love of him. And it were blasphemous for anybody to affirm that the Divine wisdom and goodness could anyway co-operate and concur by his grace towards the countenancing and corroborating any religion or profession, which were

not both most perfectly holy and undoubtedly true.

15. Consider how Holy Scripture* declares in divers places the damnableness of heresy and schism; and how by forbearing to put a difference between one kind of heresy or schism and another, it shows clearly that all heresy and schism is very damnable.

16. Consider that the holy Doctors and Fathers of the primitive Church† express their judgment clearly that all heresy and schism is wholly incapable of salvation, without repentance; and that no one point of truth concerning religion must be abandoned for the saving of a thousand lives. Insomuch as they declare that although a man should give all he had to the poor, yea, although he should lose his life for maintaining the faith of Christ our Lord against infidels; yet if obstinately he should profess any one point of doctrine against the judgment of the holy Catholic Church, which makes heresy, or obstinately refuse to submit to the discipline of the same Church, which makes schism, he cannot possibly be saved, without repentance.

17. Consider that divers of the Fathers, as namely St. Epiphanius, St. Augustine, and Philas-

* Tit. 3, 10.

† See the quotations which are put under the 9th Consideration.

trius,* who all made express catalogues of the heresies of their time, have mentioned divers which are held by the Protestants at this day, and particularly (to omit the rest) that doctrine to be heretical which denies praying and offering sacrifice for the dead. And St. Augustine saith expressly in his book *Ad Quod vult deum* (which is unquestionably his, and from which he never made any retractation), that whosoever holds that doctrine is no Catholic Christian, and cannot therefore consequently be saved.

18. Consider that St. Augustine gives also another verdict, which is for Catholics against Protestants. For in that admirable work of his, *De Civitate Dei*, which is undoubtedly his, and of which also he never retracted any point, he affirms the practice clearly of the holy Catholic Church,† in a multitude of Catholic doctrines, against the adversaries thereof, as namely, about the sacrifice of the mass, prayers to saints, veneration of saints' relics, going on pilgrimages, carrying relics in procession, the use of miracles, the making vows of chastity by nuns, the making graces before altars, the laying flowers upon them, the fetching of holy earth from Hierusalem, and keeping it with reverence in their

* Aug. haeres 53. Epiph. haeres 75, and Philastr., known to St. Augustine and familiar to St. Ambrose, verbo. Aeriani.
† St. August. l. 22, c. 8 De Civ. Dei.

houses, the frequent making the sign of the holy cross, the taking their Bishop's blessing, and the like; just as if they were done by Papists at this day. Consider, I say, these things, and consider them well.

19. Consider that when any of the Fathers of the primitive Church declares any doctrine of the Church of their time, and especially when they show the practice of the Church concerning that doctrine, the same not being contradicted by any other Doctor of the same, or the next succeeding age, that doctrine must not be esteemed to be the only judgment of that single Doctor, but of all the other Doctors also of that age, and consequently of the whole Church of their time. For else they would infallibly as well have contradicted him in that, as they did others in other things; as occurred between Tertullian and the Fathers of his time; between St. Cyprian and St. Stephen; between Rufinus, upholding the doctrine of Origen and St. Hierome, and many others. Nay, St. Hierome and St. Augustine, who of themselves held each to other so great respect, fell yet foul enough upon one another, when there was but any great difference between them, upon the interpretation of certain passages of Holy Scripture. And much more would they have done it, if either of them had differed

from the other in any article of controversy concerning religion.

20. Consider that the nature both of heresy and schism consists not so much in the particular quality, or rather quantity (as a man may say) either of the doctrine which is denied, or of the discipline which is disobeyed, but in the obstinate and presumptuous doing it against the judgment of the Church, whether the point itself in question be greater or less. For that kind of pride is the thing which sends the soul posting to hell.

21. Consider that Protestants can say nothing of moment in defence of any doctrine of theirs, which any other adversary of the Church may not also say as probably as they. For whether it be private spirit, with the Puritans, or strength of natural reason, with the Socinians, or, finally, the pretence of Scripture, which is pretended by all the adversaries of the Catholic Church; it all resolves itself at last into this: that there will none of them be tried by any other Judge in the whole world, without appeal, who can both hear and speak, and may have authority to instruct, direct, exhort, and punish, but only by themselves, who vent their own opinions under such holy words and names as they list.

22. Consider that Holy Scripture cannot possibly

be the judge of controversies in religion. For besides that no creature can possibly ever be a judge, without being able to speak, and hear, and reprove, and the like; all men cannot read, and most men cannot understand, Scripture; nor do they possess the original tongues wherein it was written; nor can they interpret it and understand it right. And therefore if Scripture were or could be the judge of all controversies in religion, without appeal, the learned man must needs have one judge, and the unlearned man must have another. And besides, there must also, in that case, be one judge of controversy in religion, at one time, namely, when the Holy Scripture is already written, and another judge, at another time, namely, before the writing of the Holy Scripture. But this were most impertinent and absurd.

23. Consider that amongst those religions, which profess themselves to be so judged by Holy Scripture, there is, and can be, nothing but disunion; disunion between them and others; nay, disunion between them and even their very selves at different times. For to say, as they do, that Holy Scripture teaches them this point of doctrine or that, is indeed but to declare that they hold this or that; because in their opinion the Scripture teaches this or that. And whensoever that opinion

alters, the Scripture shall be the thing which must alter too. Experience therefore shows what a multitude of sects* there grew daily amongst them, who tread upon such quicksands as those; whereas they who rely upon the Church, which is built (as our Blessed Saviour said) upon a rock, stand fast for ever, in perfect union amongst themselves. For as for that which some allege, by way of showing difference of opinion also amongst Catholics, the answer is shortly and clearly this: those points wherein Catholics differ be merely arbitrary, as being yet undecided by the Church; but in such as are decided there neither is, nor yet can be, any difference between us more than between any one man and himself. For whosoever shall obstinately differ from the rest becomes instantly no Catholic.

24. Consider that since Protestants hold that Catholics, dying so, may be saved, and Catholics declare with grief that Protestants, if they die so, must be lost,† what a senseless and foolish thing it is that a man should rather venture his soul, in a

* Hussites, Lutherans, Calvinists, Anabaptists, Trinitarians, New Arians, and a hundred others.

† Sir Tobie does not accurately state the Catholic doctrine in this paragraph, which is that all persons who faithfully act up to the dictates of conscience, and are invincibly ignorant of the truth of Catholicism, are guiltless in God's sight, and are in the way of salvation.—ED.

way where all his adversaries (who make the greatest, and wisest, and learnedest part of the world) hold clearly that a man cannot be saved, than in that other which is the Catholic, and of itself is so huge a portion of mankind, where not only themselves profess their hope to be saved, but even their adversaries, who are the Protestants, confess as much.

25. Consider that it is no want of charity for a man to fear, and show the danger wherein souls are; but rather that it is sincere charity to declare their danger, that so they may avoid it. And consider also that sincere charity, which is indeed the very life of true religion, is showed daily by great multitudes of Catholics, who are glad to adventure their lives, in all the parts of the world, for the saving of the souls of their neighbours. And that Protestant ministers make little proof of this virtue, since not one of them who is well beneficed, or indeed any other of them at all, doth forsake his commodities and country, for converting any one soul from Paganism in foreign parts; or doth so much as venture to Rome, to incur death or any danger there, by seeking to reduce the Pope or Cardinals from that belief which they esteem to be idolatrous here.

These are the considerations which I have

thought fit to represent to the reader, and to assure him with all sincerity that nothing hath been said in this paper, which shall not, upon the life of him that wrote it, be made good by express and clear proof of Holy Scripture itself, and of Fathers also; in such sort that it shall not be capable of any reply, save only in those considerations which are subject to gross experience and to the sight of every ordinary eye; as will indeed be confessed by every ingenuous man. And so the writer hereof undertakes that if anything in this paper be contradicted by any one, who will civilly, and briefly, and clearly declare his denial, under his hand, the truth of what is said here shall quickly, by God's help, be made appear by a much better pen than mine.

These also were the considerations and motives which wrought upon my heart, towards the making me first resolve to quit my then Protestant religion, and become a Catholic; and now I have presented them here; but in the form (as I was saying) of an humble advice, that so others may dispose themselves to do the like. And I have always been so well satisfied therein, that I here think fit to conclude with protesting the truth of two things, wherein if I mean not what I say, I pray God it may cost the perishing of my soul. The

one is that, since I was a Catholic, I never entertained one thought, during so much as any one minute of time, of repenting that I was a Catholic, or inclining to be a Protestant again. The other, that I so highly value God's blessing in his having made me a Catholic, as I take all his holy attributes to witness, and with reverence am bold to protest them all, that I would not be a Protestant again but for one hour (though I were sure God would forgive it me afterward) for the obtaining of all the honour, riches, and pleasures, which might be imparted to me by this whole world from this instant of my life till doomsday. This, I say, I protest; and God, who sees my heart, knows best that he sees nothing in it against this. For Eternity, in fine, is the great business; and Time, if it be but Time, is to shrink itself finally into nothing. And (besides all danger of drowning, by departing, though but for a minute out of the Noe's Ark of the Church, to be tossed by the swelling and stormy waves of heresy and schism) to quit the communion of Saints in the holy Catholic Church, though it were but for that only minute, upon the perishing motives of flesh and blood, I hold to be an indignity to a true Catholic Christian soul that it might well deserve a kind of hell apart, if there were any more than one.

Myself am now going into the other world, and as I shall quickly be sure to render a most strict account before that Sovereign Judge, of whatsoever I shall have affirmed in this paper, so will the reader also ere long be called to the like most strict account for the use which he will have made thereof, more or less. Our Lord have mercy upon my soul, as also upon all those who shall vouchsafe to read and consider this short writing well.

But for the present I content myself with presuming to give this last word of advice, as it were by way of postscript, to such as need it (for in a case which imports so very much even an unnecessary repetition may be endured); that men shall do well to think justly both of the innocency and loyalty of English Catholics towards others, as also of their unity and good agreement amongst themselves. For concerning the loyalty of us Catholics to our several lawful Princes throughout the world, I know and here declare and protest, with the words and heart of a dying man, that we know ourselves to be all bound by our very religion to be ever, and that inviolably, their most loyal and their most devoted subjects; and to employ our fortunes and lives for their service, and upon their commands. On the other side, I take now upon my death this most certain truth which follows:

that (besides those tumults, and rebellions, and conspiracies, and murders, and wars, which have even over-wrought divers great parts of Christendom by the furies and resolves of Luther, and Calvin, and their followers in the way of fact) the very maxims and doctrines of those mad apostles are such roots of faction, and dissension, and sedition, and are indeed so very destructive of all monarchy, that it seems to be totally impossible for any other thing to grow from them than those bitter and sour fruits, which have in this last age of the world so intoxicated and even poisoned these Northern parts thereof.

And as for that other pretence of our division amongst ourselves here in England, I declare also in the word of truth, that howsoever there be some differences amongst us, yea and between us, in certain arbitrary, and indifferent, and undecided things (as there were even in St. Paul's days, *alii sic, alii autem sic*, and afterwards in the primitive Church, amongst the Christians of that time, in matters of very great moment; for we see what happened sharply between St. Cyprian and St. Stephen, Pope, wherein all men find plainly now that St. Cyprian was extremely in the wrong), yet we perfectly agree together in all things which are decided and commanded by the Church. And

much more evidently do we all communicate most uniformly with one another, both in matter of faith and sacraments, and in all things concerning the public service of Almighty God. This union is not resembled by that which is found amongst the Lutherans and Calvinists in their several congregations and conventicles, who both in their pulpits and books, which lie open to the view of the world, do so bitterly rail at, and curse, and damn their fellow-Protestants to the very pit of hell; and will no more communicate with one another than the Pope would be glad to do with the great Turk.

Now I leave these points to be weighed by Protestants with as much care as I mean it to them with kindness; beseeching them for God Almighty's sake to make good use thereof. Which if they shall be pleased to do, they will both forgive me now for that which they will now call importunity, and grow hereafter to love my memory for that which they will then esteem to have been true charity.

(signed) JAMES LOUTH.

July 29th, 1641.

I doubt that this signature is part of the original MS. The same writer seems to have inserted an irrelevant word or two, and *Jam* (part of *James*) on the preceding page.—ED.

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